M. Schuler

Minutes of the

Meeting of the Executive Committee

of the

World Council of Churches

15 - 18 September 1998

Meeting held in Amersfoort, The Netherlands

150 route de Ferney
CH-1211 Geneva 2

CONFIDENTIAL
Not for publication

EX/2/98

CONTENTS

1. Opening Actions

A. Worship 1
B. Welcome 1
C. Roll Call 1
D. Minutes of previous Meeting 2
E. Adoption of Agenda and Timetable 2

2. Report of the General Secretary 2

3. Evaluation of Executive Committee 6

4. Progress Report on Internal Reorganisation 6

5. Applications for Membership 10

6. Eighth Assembly Matters:

A. The Zimbabwe Context 12
B. Decade Festival 13
C. Assembly Plenaries 15
D. Padare 16
E. Membership of Committees 17
F. Advisers 17
G. Worship and Service of Recommitment 18
H. Assembly Materials, Media Operation 19
I. General Preparation, Logistics 19

7. Orthodox Participation in the WCC 21

8. Relationships with the Roman Catholic Church 29

9. Forum of Christian Churches and Ecumenical Organisations 30

10. Public Issues 32

11. Revision of By-Laws 39

12. Report of Programme Sub-committee:

A. Relationships with REOs 40
B. Programme Report 41
C. Globalisation 41
D. Future status of ENI 42
E. Resolution on the ACT Network 42
F. Progress Report on MAI 43
G. Draft Statement on Debt 44

13. Report of Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee:

A. Staffing Report 45
B. Eighth Assembly: Observers 50
C. Eighth Assembly: Elections 51

14. Finance Matters:

A. Finance Presentation 53
B. Report of Finance Sub-committee 54

15. Moderator's and General Secretary's Reports to the Eighth Assembly 60

16. Dates for future meetings 60

17. Closing Actions 61

APPENDICES:

I Attendance 62

II Membership of Sub-committees 64

III Evaluation of Executive Committee 65

IV Orthodox Participation in the WCC 69

V Forum of Christian Churches andEcumenical Organisations . . . 83

VI Budget for 1999 88

World Council of Churches

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

held at the Tulip Inn, Amersfoort, The Netherlands

15-18 September 1998

1. OPENING ACTIONS

A. Worship

Worship took place each morning in the meeting room, led by members of the Executive Committee, following liturgies prepared by Rev. Terry MacArthur.

B. Opening Actions

The Moderator, His Holiness Aram I, opened the session of the WCC Executive Committee at 9.00 hrs on Tuesday 15 September 1998. After welcoming participants to this last full meeting of this Executive Committee, he spoke of the contribution made by members within the world-wide ecumenical family, and noted that there would be opportunity for critical self-assessment of what had been done over the past seven year period as the Executive Committee.

This meeting coincided with the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948. On 19 September members of the Executive Committee were invited to join in the celebrations organised by the Netherlands Council of Churches and the Amsterdam Council of Churches.

The two main items on the agenda were matters related to the Eighth Assembly, and relationships between the WCC and the Orthodox Churches. The Moderator believed that the present situation faced by the World Council in relation to the Orthodox Churches was one of the most difficult that it had had to confront during the 50 years of its existence. He therefore called on members of the Committee for guidance as the Council moved towards the Eighth Assembly.

C. Roll Call

The General Secretary called the roll, noting apologies for absence from several members. It was **agreed** that Hieromonk Hilarion Alfeyev act as substitute for Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk, and Bishop Nifon of Slobozia and Calarasi for Metropolitan Daniel of Moldavia and Bukovina.

D. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, 17-20 February 1998, were **approved** as circulated, with one correction: the next meeting of the Executive Committee would take place on 1-2 December (not on 2-3 December).

E. Adoption of Agenda and Timetable

The General Secretary outlined the agenda, indicating some proposed changes; the agenda was **adopted**. It was suggested that an additional sub-committee of the Executive be appointed to consider proposals on Public Issues with a view to the assembly. Membership was **agreed** as follows: Dr A. Tolen (convener), Bishop Anderson, Mr J. Briggs, Dr M. Kässmann, Bishop Nifon, Rev. E. Santana.

2. REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Dr Raiser began by saying that the seven months since February had been among the most intensive and difficult that he had experienced since assuming his position as general secretary. Not only had there been the implementation of the process of internal reorganisation, including painful decisions about staff cuts, but there had been a number of crises in relation to the assembly, continuing financial uncertainty, and, in addition, the unrest in the Council's relationships with the Orthodox Churches. All these difficulties combined had at times been overwhelming, and Dr Raiser expressed gratitude to staff colleagues for their support and for maintaining a sense of purpose and good faith. He believed that as a result, he could present a more confident picture to the Executive than had been possible at the last meeting.

In view of the need to be in Geneva, Dr Raiser had travelled very little in recent months: he had visited member churches in Madagascar in March, and member churches in Jerusalem in June; he had also paid a brief visit to Harare.

A number of important meetings had taken place, either organised by the WCC or to which he or staff colleagues had been invited to represent the Council. The last meeting in the present series with general secretaries of REOs took place in April; there was a consultation on Religious Liberty and Proselytism in Tantur in June; a consultation to envisage future work in the area of Education; a meeting of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ) - the first time a WCC general secretary had been invited to contribute to this event that takes place every two years. In July, the Second International Congress of people involved in inter-church marriages was held in Geneva.

50th anniversary of the WCC
This being the anniversary year of the World Council, a wide range of meetings and interviews offered opportunity to reflect on the present situation of WCC and the future of the ecumenical movement. An invitation to member churches to mark the anniversary with special events had met with a positive response. Special celebrations had been arranged in cities that had been the site of former assemblies. In addition to events in different parts of the world, a series of celebratory occasions was planned in Geneva in the week following this Executive. The concluding event would take place in Harare on 13 December - the culmination of a process in which many member churches would have joined during the preceding months.

Internal reorganisation
The units were concluding their work and the new teams were beginning to organise themselves. Although SEG would remain active until the assembly, the new Staff Leadership Group had taken on certain responsibilities reflecting the new organisational pattern. A process had been set up to help staff to begin envisaging the future.

Relationships
The meeting with general secretaries of REOs concluded a period of review and strengthening of relationships between the WCC and REOs, looking towards the post-assembly period. All REOs had or would shortly have new leadership, and many were raising questions about the continued viability of ecumenism at regional level. A review of the Council's relationships as a whole was included in the mandate of OCER, which would include identifying areas for possible action.

Secondly, at the February meeting the Executive had had opportunity to consider the Council's relationships with Orthodox member churches, as a result of which the general secretary was asked to find ways of continuing the dialogue about Orthodox participation in the WCC. Preparations were begun for a second meeting along the lines of the one held in Antelias, bringing together Orthodox and Protestant representatives. But then the Ecumenical Patriarch issued an invitation to an inter-Orthodox meeting in Thessaloniki in April, which was followed by the pre-assembly meeting for Orthodox delegates to the Assembly which took place in Damascus in May.

The recommendations from these two meetings had been the subject of further extensive consultation, in particular the request made at Thessaloniki that a Mixed Theological Commission (MTC) be formed as soon as possible. The Moderator came to Geneva to discuss the situation, and wrote to leaders of all Orthodox churches, while the general secretary wrote to representatives of some other member churches, suggesting a preparatory meeting in relation to the formation of a MTC in June. However the Ecumenical Patriarch felt there was not sufficient time to prepare adequately for such a

meeting so it was cancelled. During this period, although no official communication had yet been received, it was learned that the Bulgarian Orthodox Church had decided to leave the WCC. Further debate on the question of Orthodox participation in the WCC would take place in the course of this Executive Committee.

The 7th report of the Joint Working Group between the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church (JWG) would be submitted to the assembly, and Policy Reference Committee I would be asked to formulate a response on behalf of the Council. A positive response had already been received from Cardinal Cassidy of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU). A Memorandum prepared by Dr Alan Falconer, director of Faith and Order, had been shared with members of the Executive, offering an analysis of developments and actions by the Vatican in recent months.

Eighth Assembly

Visits to Zimbabwe had revealed problems of communication within the churches there in relation to the assembly, partly due to one-sided media presentation of the Council. To counteract this situation, Melaku Kifle had been asked to go to Zimbabwe for a four week period and to spend time with the churches, helping them to understand what the assembly was all about.

The political and economic situation in Zimbabwe had been very difficult throughout the year, with a general strike early on, a fall in the value of the Z$, and the closure of the university until the new academic year 1999. Currently there was military involvement in the Congo crisis. It was encouraging that heads of communions had issued a pastoral letter in July - a courageous statement expressing a sense of responsibility of the Christian community for the future of the country.

As the Executive may wish to send a signal to the churches in Zimbabwe, the Africa Task Force had prepared an assessment of the situation to serve as a background for a possible letter. Secondly, since there was some uncertainty as to whether the assembly would go ahead, Dr Raiser felt it was the responsibility of this Executive to strongly affirm the intention that it would take place.

The issue of homosexuality continued to come up, and some of the problems in Zimbabwe focused on the group of gays and lesbians (GALZ) who had applied for a space at the Padare. Guidelines for Padare contributions had been strictly applied, but the expected endorsement by a member church body had not yet been forthcoming. Dr Raiser affirmed that this group had no desire to create conflict within the Council - on the contrary it was understanding and cooperative. He hoped this potential problem would be resolved in a way that was acceptable to the churches in the country and beyond.

Particular attention had been given to the media and a special briefing paper prepared by Communication colleagues was being made widely available.

Follow-up of Executive Committee meeting - February 1998
The paper on gender policy guidelines had been communicated to staff, and its implementation would be part of the process of reorganisation. New guidelines for human resources management would be worked out in 1999 as part of the new organisational plan.

In thanking the General Secretary for his report, the Moderator expressed appreciation to him and to staff colleagues for their courage and commitment during such a difficult time in the life of the Council.

The Moderator was concerned that the word "crisis" was being associated with the WCC and urged that the use of such terminology in relation to the Council must cease; the Council was not "in crisis", it was facing crisis. Steps must be taken to improve the atmosphere with respect to the WCC.

Discussion
In response to a question by Bishop Okullu, the general secretary said that the AACC staff were being very cooperative in relation to the assembly, and several of them had visited Zimbabwe to demonstrate that the assembly was not just a WCC affair but was of concern for the churches in Africa as a whole. He was glad that the assembly was serving as an instrument for improving relationships between AACC and WCC.

Bishop Anderson requested further background to the JWG report and asked why visible unity was the cause of such concern. Mr Lemopoulos pointed out that the expression "positive advance" had been used with respect to the broader framework of dialogue that had been achieved. Faith and Order's work on ecclesiology and communion had been recognised at the highest level and was referred to in the papal encyclical *Ut unum sint.*

Mr Lemopoulos referred to preparations for the year 2000 on the RCC side, noting that prior to the publication of the RCC calendar for the year, Cardinal Etchgeray had shared it with the general secretary. Unfortunately there were serious questions from the ecumenical perspective which was very limited. However, the WCC had tried to keep a certain distance since there were no plans to celebrate the year except through the experiences of its member churches. The Moderator expressed regret that the calendar had been presented as an ecumenical calendar related to the millennium activities; the Council should perhaps have taken a more pro-active role in this connection.

Bishop Nifon pointed out that the Ecumenical Patriarch had agreed that the Patriarchate

of Jerusalem should be responsible for the proposed event in that city. Mr Lemopoulos affirmed that a visit had been made to the Jerusalem Patriarchate to explore where such an event might take place, and whether an ecumenical celebration of the millennium could take place in Jerusalem in the period between Christmas and Epiphany. The response was negative, and since no ecumenical events were foreseen, each church would celebrate in its own way.

Dr Raiser reminded the Executive that it had been clear from the start that Rome was determined to use the year 2000 as an occasion to present its own claims to universal Christian leadership on a world-wide scale. The Executive had begun to raise this question in Bucharest in September 1994, before the Pope had released his apostolic letter, and had said then that the Council should not be tempted to globalise. Rather, the Executive had decided that emphasis should be on facilitating churches in their own setting to give expression to the year 2000 and to use the millennium as an invitation to manifest their unity as churches in a given place.

He believed this had been the right approach, although it had revealed that many member churches were not prepared to take up the challenge to plan a manifestation in the year 2000 in their own settings; they seemed more concerned to compete on universal level. The WCC had been attempting to bring together representatives of the major church families to engage them in a process of reflection and planning, and to discuss the possibility of linking up with each other.

Mr Lemopoulos noted that although the calendar may seem impressive to those who were unfamiliar with the dynamics of its preparation, it had created tensions within the RCC.

3. EVALUATION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Ms Mary Ann Lundy referred to the questionnaire prepared by staff at the request of the Executive at its last meeting, and urged members to respond carefully to the questions. A compilation of the comments made would be helpful as attention was turned towards looking at future working structures. This compilation is attached to these minutes (Appendix III) so that the present members could refer it as their self-assessment to the future Executive Committee.

4. PROGRESS REPORT ON INTERNAL REORGANISATION

Ms Lundy presented a paper reporting on developments in the area of internal re-organisation, which included a number of appendices. Implementation of the changes had

been difficult but she believed that the corner had been turned and that outlines for the future were now clearer. Staff had been kept informed of developments, and efforts had been made to ensure that the process was as transparent as possible.

The five areas constituting the main concerns during recent months had reached varying degrees of maturity - some had reached a conclusion, others were progressing, and some were still at an early stage:

1. Generic descriptions of job profiles and analysis of workload
These two exercises were intended to define measurable tasks and functions which would be called for by the team profiles. The workload analysis, after a series of training sessions, permitted an assessment of the needs and possibilities in using human resources.

Brought together, the results of these two exercises led to a mapping of linkages and identifying activities that could be consolidated, centralised or linked informally to others, thus enabling a further specification of post-assembly staffing numbers.

2. Formation of teams and appointment of team coordinators
The process of application and selection for positions in the new structure began with an interviewing process involving some 90 administrative and technical staff. It was important to maintain a balance between respecting established experience/ competencies, and openness to creative change. Team coordinators were appointed who began working as a "team", thus preparing the way for phasing into the new structure after the summer break.

The total WCC staff at 1 January 1999, including consultants, seconded staff and interns, would be 217 (i.e.196.32 full-time equivalents [FTEs]), while the total "core" staff would be 177, (i.e. 156.82 FTEs).

3. Leadership in the new structure
In view of the Executive Committee's suggestion that further attention be given to "the decision-making process", the Staff Group on Internal Organisation (SGIO) attempted a descriptive interpretation of certain leadership functions; a separate working paper was also prepared on this subject.

The Management Team felt it was necessary to look beyond the formal description of the mandate of the Staff Leadership Group (SLG) to clarify processes and procedures which lead to effective decision-making. The role of the SLG was affirmed as being one of promoting the integral character of the work of the WCC, keeping before staff the vision of the organisation as conceived in the CUV documents and setting long-term goals and

procedures for evaluation of the progress made along the way. This would imply a new way of exercising leadership, providing for effective communication and discussion on various staff levels in order to facilitate responsible decision-making on the part of the SLG.

With the assistance of Dr Morgan Gould, the SLG would begin setting up a mechanism for the on-going evaluation of the Council's work, even as the teams/clusters make provision for a bi-annual evaluation of their programmatic work. It would also be important to begin working on clarifying the real-time decision-making process with the aim of making transparent the cohesiveness of WCC's work, the responsibilities of the teams, clusters and SLG leading up to the meetings of governing bodies. This process included events connected to planning and evaluation, fund-raising, budget-building, and staffing. In further defining this process, inter-action with the team leaders, the teams and the clusters should be taken into account.

4. Decision-making on the team and cluster level

Together with the task of clarifying the decision-making processes at the level of the SLG, a process began from the perspective of the teams, trying to identify areas for further reflection with regard to the possibilities and responsibilities of teams and clusters in participating in this decision-making process, thus facilitating the internal flow of decisions within the "one administrative whole".

This would include participation in budget-building, further definition of areas and styles of cross-team work, and particularly the role of regional and other task forces.

5. Relations to governing and consultative bodies

For purposes of clarity and for better understanding the implications of the new structure, the amendments to the Rules with regard to Consultative and Advisory Bodies, and particularly the role of the Governing Bodies in the post-CUV period of the WCC, a new Structural Map had been prepared. In a form of successive graphic presentations, this attempted to provide information on (a) structures; (b) membership; (c) nominations, election and appointment; (d) policy, and (e) accountability. This Structural Map could eventually be distributed to all staff and to the members of the WCC governing, consultative and advisory bodies.

In presenting a working paper on Leadership in the new Structure, Ms Lundy spoke of the difference between management and leadership, and the effort made to listen to the initiatives that came from the teams themselves.

Ms Blyth, director of the cluster on Relationships and Constituencies, explained that the emphasis had been on trying to help colleagues who were still in their former jobs and

focusing on the assembly nevertheless to start thinking how to orientate themselves towards the new teams. She believed the teams would soon begin to meet to see how they would work as teams, and begin the process of prioritising. Information had to be communicated to funding partners urgently if income were to be received for 1999. Tentative plans for 1999 were being requested from each team, helping them focus and discern the direction in which they should be moving.

Dr Kässmann said it would be helpful to have an organigram setting out how staff would be organised. How would assembly delegates be informed about the new structure?

Ms Lundy responded that, since the first phase of the Hearings would be based on the old structure, a way would have to be found in phase II of the Hearings to explain the new structure, which would also be described in the Programme book (the second part of the Workbook).

Dr Tolen pointed out that it should be made clear to delegates that they were still free to contribute to this process, and if they wished to change the structure again they could do so. Our difficulty was on the one hand the need to respect the integrity of the assembly, while on the other we must be prepared for any position not to be final. This had to be stated clearly: it was essential for delegates to realise that they have this responsibility and understand the kind of work done thus far. We must avoid giving any impression that the assembly was expected to accept everything that was proposed.

Dr Raiser was grateful for this strong affirmation of the need to invite the assembly to address the issue of future programme guidelines and policy and not spend time on re-opening the discussion on structure. The assembly was not the appropriate body to deal with internal organisation, management or administration, nor had this been the case in the past. The assembly would delegate such tasks to the committees appointed to serve in the next period. Delegates should concentrate on providing clear directions for the future work of the Council, and we would have to fit into these. The Central Committee may have to adapt the structure to respond to the demands made, but the idea of the team structure was that it be flexible enough to be adapted to the needs.

Bishop Anderson asked whether the staff in general were beginning to feel that the new structure was the right one. Ms Lundy underlined the difficulties of going through a process of change and admitted there was still some anxiety among staff regarding the future. But every effort was being made to help each staff member contribute to his or her own particular vision. Ms Blyth affirmed that the inter-relationship between CUV and the new structure was becoming clearer, and the emphasis on the importance of exploring new patterns, networking, and so on had become a new way of thinking as staff, both internally as teams, and externally.

The Moderator expressed some concern about the future Programme Committee: he felt that in view of its functions and accountability, it might become the most powerful body in the Council. He would be satisfied as long as it acted as a *bridge* between the commissions and the Central Committee, but he was concerned lest it become a *wall* that might block the necessary linkages. Secondly, he asked about the role of the general secretary as interpreter of the Council's work to Central Committee, and the role of the General Secretariat within the total function of the WCC. We tend to speak about leadership in a horizontal understanding but it must include the vertical dimension also.

Dr Raiser responded that the general secretary should be seen in connection both with staff and with the governing bodies - as the only permanent full-time executive officer of the Council, he had this double role. As secretary of the governing bodies, he had the task of seeing to the implementation of their decisions, as well as monitoring preparations for their meetings.

With regard to the Programme Committee: its role was crucial, and its aim must be to achieve the integration of the Council's work into a coherent whole, as stressed by the CUV process. The Programme Committee would replace the four Unit Committees and Committee on the General Secretariat, bringing them together into one body and thus clarifying the linkages. It had no authority of its own but was a standing committee of Central Committee, in the same way as the Finance and Executive Committees. The Programme Committee would facilitate and prepare for the policy-setting and actions of Central Committee and would only meet in conjunction with Central Committee. It was one of the responsibilities of the general secretary to ensure that these three standing committees act as a bridge between the advisory level and the level of governance.

The report was referred to the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee.

At a later session, Dr Nababan reported on behalf of the Sub-committee. It recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**

> *to receive the report with appreciation, noting the progress made. It further requested that simple information be provided to the Assembly delegates about the new internal structure and the governing and advisory bodies.*

5. APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Mr van Beek introduced applications for membership from seven churches in Africa, of which three were from African Independent Churches, together with an application for affiliation from the Council of Protestant Churches of Equatorial Guinea.

It was noted that these applications would be referred to the Policy Reference Committee at the assembly. New applicants would be received into membership during a plenary session, and those churches which had joined the Council since Canberra would also be recognised.

In response to a question about the fact that some African Independent churches do not practice the sacraments, Dr Raiser explained that the criteria for membership did not mention any particular rule in this regard, but applicants were required to accept the Basis of WCC. Some of these churches needed more time to find the most appropriate way for them. For example, at the time when the Kimbanguist Church was accepted into membership (1969), they did not celebrate either baptism or the eucharist; since then, however, they had developed their own liturgies and now practice these two sacraments.

Bishop Nifon thought there had been some discussion earlier as to whether such churches might become associate members to begin with. Dr Raiser affirmed that there had been some consideration about widening the scope of associate membership, but it was felt that the initiative for this should come from the church requesting associate status rather than at the Council's suggestion.

Secondly, under the present constitutional framework it would not be appropriate for the WCC to establish any criteria for membership which must be fulfilled in ecclesiological terms: this was in accordance with the Toronto statement. A new discussion was pending here but had not yet taken place.

The applications were referred to the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee.

At a later session Dr Nababan presented the Sub-committee's report. It proposed that the Executive Committee recommend to the Eighth Assembly that the following churches be received into full membership of the World Council of Churches:

The Harrist Church (Eglise Harriste), Côte d'Ivoire
The Council of African Instituted Churches, South Africa - CAIC
The Celestial Church of Christ, Nigeria
The Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria
The United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe
The Anglican Church of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo.

The Sub-committee further proposed that the Executive Committee recommend to the Assembly that **the Council of Protestant Churches of Equatorial Guinea (Consejo de Iglesias Evangélicas de Guinea Ecuatorial)** be received as an associate council. The Executive Committee **agreed**.

6. EIGHTH ASSEMBLY MATTERS

A. The Zimbabwe Context

Rev. Sam Kobia introduced the subject, referring to a background paper describing the current situation in Zimbabwe. This underlined the uncertain political climate in the country characterised by renewed struggles for succession behind the scenes; new developments in relation to church and state; the fact that some 700 people die each week as a result of HIV/AIDS; the preoccupation with the issue of human sexuality, although this had recently become less evident in the media; the issue of land reform, long overdue, which had led to landless people camping in the grounds of white-owned farms; the ever deteriorating state of the economy with the Zim.dollar at a record low and food prices constantly on the increase.

In the midst of this situation, the Heads of Denominations had published a **Pastoral Letter on the Current State of the Nation**, in which they were courageous enough to assert their social responsibility in the country. It concluded with a series of recommendations on the above-mentioned issues, and marked a significant step towards consolidating the prophetic ministry that was so badly needed. At this *Kairos* moment they evoked the assembly theme, stating that it was not too late to "turn to God and rejoice in hope".

Mr Melaku Kifle, who had recently spent a month in Zimbabwe, reported that the churches were now fully committed to the assembly. They were well informed about the Council as a result of intensive visits by staff and were looking forward to receiving the assembly. John Pobee was currently in Zimbabwe, undertaking a number of specific tasks at the request of the general secretary.

Mr Kifle noted that wherever he went, the issue of human sexuality was usually raised early on in the encounter. The WCC's position had been made clear - that the Council had not taken any position on the issue. Finally this stance had been accepted and their attitude towards the Council had consequently changed.

Dr Kässmann spoke of the predicament of the students, noting that the churches had set up a committee on question of the closure of the university and were in dialogue with the leadership of the university and with the government. She urged that the situation be followed carefully, respecting what was being done before coming to any decision about possible action: it was essential to respect the culture of the people and the social issues they were facing. Mr Kobia did not exclude the possibility that the students might wish to convey some message to the government while the assembly was present - they were aware that the media would be present and that any such message would be heard.

The general secretary did not feel the Council should be expected to speak about the political situation in Zimbabwe - that would be a violation of the obligations of a guest. For this reason he was proposing that the Executive respond to the pastoral letter from the heads of churches, making it clear that the Council supported their witness.

Ms Rantakari noted that, since the churches had accepted the Council's view with regard to the human sexuality issue, we should move forward by finding ways to deal with it, through the ZCC, even prior to the assembly. It was important to make it clear that people have different views on the issue. With regard to the high incidence of HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe, she felt this had become a threat to the very survival of the country; how could we deal with this as a fellowship of churches?

The Moderator summarised the present position, saying that in spite of the unstable situation due to political and economic upheavals, we were determined to go to Harare in full confidence that the assembly's work would not be affected. We must be ready to face some problematic situations, perhaps even a demonstration by students and the consequences that would bring. As the assembly we should not remain silent. Meanwhile we must continue to engage the local churches in a learning process about the WCC and the ecumenical movement, monitoring the situation closely.

Dr Raiser affirmed that he had asked John Pobee to strengthen contacts with the government and discuss details of the memorandum of understanding. Secondly, former staff colleague Hugh McCullum was currently based in Zimbabwe, working with the media and writing a regular column in one of the main newspapers. This was part of a determined effort to spread information about the WCC and the assembly.

Ms Stromberg had just returned from Harare and reported that many students were in fact on campus, pursuing their upper level studies. The university situation was very complex, but the basic factor was economic. It could not continue to function due to lack of funds, so it was not simply a matter of the students not being able to study. Dr Raiser said that the chaplain was one of the few who had the students' confidence; he proposed that the Executive's expressions of concern be shared with him and some means sought by which some of the young people at the assembly, and at the pre-assembly youth meeting, might meet with a few of the students in order to gain a deeper understanding of their problems, and see whether some appropriate way could be found for the assembly to respond.

B. Decade Festival

Ms Aruna Gnanadason reported on the current position with regard to plans for the Festival. There were some 820 applicants but travel was not yet assured for all these; nevertheless it was hoped to have a total of 900 present altogether; in addition about 100

men would be taking part. Young people would attend the first two days of the Festival, and then go to the Youth Event.

The plan to ask the regional ecumenical organisations to coordinate the selection process for participants had been a success. Local arrangements were being coordinated by the Zimbabwe Convention Bureau in Harare; staff were working closely with the ZCC and a local committee.

The programme planning was proceeding well; there would be two plenaries, one by African women, the other by young women. The hearing on violence against women in the church was drawing a good deal of response from women. Worship and Bible study were being coordinated by a group of women from different regions and denominations. An integral part of the programme was the exhibition "Recalling Her-story and our vision"; material and ideas were being gathered from all regions of the world.

There would be Shona style huts in the open space around the meeting place, each containing displays by various groups and organisations. Some huts would be set aside for sharing and networking among participants on a variety of issues. Others would be designated for use by organisations invited to take part.

En route for the Festival some 225 participants were planning to visit nineteen countries in Africa, with the purpose of affirming the positive contributions that women make to the development of their countries and to give visibility to the strength and courage of African women.

Dr Tolen stressed the need to underline that the Decade was the Churches' Decade, yet for many it had been more like a Women's Decade. How could this be expressed clearly at the assembly? Bishop Zacharias appreciated the work that had been done during the Decade but agreed that many churches had handed over the issues to the women. He felt it would be necessary to take steps after the Festival to see that the churches undertake tasks supporting the women in their struggles and aspirations. The Decade should not be closed but be taken up further by the churches themselves.

Responding to a question, Ms Gnanadason said that one document would be prepared during the Festival for presentation to the assembly during the Decade plenary. She further noted that only about 38% of assembly delegates were women, which meant that, in spite of all the effort put into the Decade, the increase in the percentage of women as compared to Canberra was only one-half percent. This was a serious question for the churches.

The report was referred to the Programme Sub-committee.

C. Assembly Plenaries

Plans for each plenary session had been worked out in detail and were shared with members of the Executive. These included the plenary on the Assembly Theme; the Africa plenary; the Decade Plenary, and two plenaries on the Common Understanding and Vision. A proposed agenda for each of the Business sessions had also been prepared.

Dr Raiser spoke in some detail about the two **CUV plenaries**, during which four documents would be discussed:

- the policy statement "Towards a Common Understanding and Vision of the World Council of Churches" (text in workbook);
- "Our Ecumenical Vision" (in workbook);
- constitutional amendments and rule changes (in workbook);
- broader proposals for institutional change (documents to be distributed in Harare).

With the exception of the Vision statement which would be referred to the Message Committee, the other three would be referred to Policy Reference Committee I which would have the task of formulating recommendations for action by the assembly.

However, there was a feeling in some churches that the discussion needed to go beyond CUV which was seen to be too much on the theoretical level; they would like to see the proposals translated into a different style of working and living together as member churches of the WCC. Adequate time must be provided for this. In addition, it may be necessary to make room in the assembly programme to address questions regarding Orthodox participation in the WCC, otherwise this may come up in the context of CUV.

Dr Kässmann urged that presentations be kept to the minimum to allow sufficient time for people to become engaged in the issues being discussed.

Mr Kobia spoke of the detailed plans for the **Africa plenary**. The specific objective were:
- to project a realistic (positive and negative) situation of Africa: sharing where Africa has come from, where Africa is, what she is going through, and where/what she is likely to be in the future;
- to counter the media-influenced image that tends to dramatise the woes of Africa;
- to challenge the ecumenical movement to affirm Africa at the era of globalisation, whose tendency is to exclude the continent;
- to point to the signs of hope for abundant life with dignity in sustainable communities.

The session would include presentations - stories told through drama; some analysis and

interpretation of these presentations; plenary discussion, culminating in an act of commitment. The cultural evening would follow, the two events to be seen as two phases of the same process.

D. Preparing for Padare - Signposts for a Common Journey

Rev. Myra Blyth introduced a paper reporting on the preparations for the five-day period of the Padare - the meeting place for common deliberation in the Shona tradition of Zimbabwe, and a unique space in which to experience and celebrate the fellowship among Christians which had developed in and grown with the ecumenical movement. The space for dialogue and deliberation created through the Padare required an ethos of humility and respect for others, which could perhaps best be described as the ethos of a *common journey of faith.*

Referring to a visit to Harare for a workshop with local participants, Ms Blyth spoke of the opportunity this had provided to listen to and learn from the people about their understanding of the tradition of padare. The women and men had different experiences to relate, based on gender specific traditions. Padare was the place where people gathered: to share and receive wisdom, for counseling and formation, to achieve consensus through open dialogue and mutual respect, above all, taking time. But then colonialism arrived with all the changes that that involved. Now they were trying to re-discover the notion of padare.

A set of "signposts for a common journey" had been drafted to help delegates understand something of the intention, the spirituality, of padare, of being the people of God together. She asked members of the Executive to comment on this text which was to be shared with participants.

It had been decided to appoint a Padare Advisory Group (PAG) which would have four tasks:
a) to be present in and around the padare events, especially those where tensions might be anticipated or arise;
b) to be pro-active in providing mediation should the need arise;
c) to interpret padare to the Business Committee, and if necessary to the press;
d) to approve any changes or additions to the printed padare programme which may be requested during the five days.

In order to prepare for this work, members of the PAG would meet before the assembly, and regularly during the padare itself, in order to oversee their mandate and monitor the work. A proposed list of members would be shared with the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee for recommendation to the Executive.

In response to a question, Ms Blyth said that the style of presentations proposed during the padare - which would include some 400 events - was very varied, though most would take the form of workshops where people could tell their stories and experiences. Each application has had to be endorsed by a member church or associated organisation, and in some cases these endorsements were still awaited.

A briefing paper on the issue of human sexuality had been prepared by the Communication Office for the use of journalists.

The documents were referred to the Programme Sub-committee, and membership of the Padare Advisory Group to the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee.

At a later session, Dr Nababan presented the report of the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee. It recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**, *to approve the appointment of the following persons to the Padare Advisory Group:*

- Archbishop Anastasios, Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania;
- Pauline Arola, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland;
- Diana Francis, UK (has since declined)
- Clifton Kirkpatrick, Presbyterian Church (USA);
- Godwin Lalachoi, Zimbabwe
- Priyanka Mendis, Church of Ceylon
- Jean Skuse, Uniting Church of Australia;
- Aaron Tolen, Eglise presbytérienne camerounaise.

E. Membership of Assembly Committees

Ms Stromberg spoke to the list of proposed membership of Committees which had been circulated. A number of changes had been identified, mainly in cases where a person had not accepted to serve, and several new proposals were noted for endorsement by the Executive. The document was referred to the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee.

At a later session, Dr Nababan reported on behalf of the Sub-committee. A number of proposals were made for changes or substitutions in the membership of all Committees. Keeping in mind the necessary balances, the proposed changes were carefully considered, and with some further changes, the lists of Committee membership were **approved**.

F. Advisers

An updated list of advisers was shared with the Executive. Dr Raiser pointed out that there was only a limited number of places available for advisers as agreed by Central

Committee, and although many additional people would have wished to come in this capacity, it was not possible to increase the number. Those invited each had a particular expertise required for a specific area of assembly business.

The document was referred to the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee.

At a later session, Dr Nababan reported on behalf of the Sub-committee. It recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**

> *to approve the list of names not so far approved; to add two additional persons from the Russian Orthodox Church and one from the HKBP, Indonesia; and four additional Orthodox names as possible replacements.*

G. Worship: Service of Recommitment - Sunday 13 December 1998

Ms Mary Ann Lundy introduced the proposed Order of Worship for the Service of Recommitment. Since the church leaders present would be involved in the exchange of crosses, it had been decided that the liturgy would be led mainly by young people.

Dr Raiser said that a number of spiritual heads of member churches had agreed to be present in Harare for this occasion, even if they were not members of their delegations. It was important therefore to take this opportunity to recognise their presence. In cases where the head of the church was not present, the leader of the delegation would be requested to take part in this Service.

Prior to the Service, a public meeting, moderated by Dr Pauline Webb, would take place in the plenary hall. This would focus around two presentations, and would include various forms of articulating the history of the WCC during the past 50 years. In order to ensure that this session have a clear profile and message, the assistance of a media producer had been enlisted. Also invited for this occasion were former presidents, moderators and general secretaries; they would be invited to be on the podium as living witnesses of the Council and the different generations of its leadership.

Following this session, participants would move to the worship tent for the Service of Recommitment. This would be followed by a social time including a meal, African style music and presentations around the campus, as well as a showing of some of the videotaped messages sent to the assembly.

Ms Lundy referred to the **Opening Worship** which would be a celebration of the assembly theme, remembering past assemblies, and introducing the theme through Leviticus and Colossians. As a recognition of the significance of the assembly as well as

the culmination of the Decade, WCC president Rev. Eunice Santana had been invited to preach.

Closing Worship would be prepared during the course of the assembly so that it could incorporate the various elements coming out of the assembly. The question of a preacher was being left open for the time being, though it was possible that one of the newly elected officers of the Central Committee might be asked.

H. Assembly Materials, Media Operation

Mr Marlin VanElderen mentioned the various publications that had been produced in recent months in relation to the assembly. Four books - *Turn to God - Rejoice in Hope: Bible Studies and Meditations; From Canberra to Harare; The Drumbeat of Life: Jubilee in an African Context*, by Sebastian Bakare, and *Welcome to Zimbabwe*, together with the *Assembly Workbook* had been sent to all official participants. The *Assembly Handbook* (to go with the Workbook), and *the Assembly Worship Book* would be available to all participants in Zimbabwe. Other publications were referred to in the documents received by Executive Committee members.

A media operation was underway in Harare to make local people aware of the assembly, in which former staff colleague Hugh McCullum was involved. For the secular media, the assembly had been of little interest so far, but as the time approached they would be preparing for their coverage, including a supplement in the main daily newspaper.

A monthly feature service had been produced to help journalists prepare for the assembly, and regular press briefings were being organised. The web-site had material about the assembly and would be operating in Harare, providing continuous information. Press conferences would take place daily at noon, with attendance limited to the registered media. A video would be produced, and participants would be invited to sign up for a copy.

I. General Preparations, Logistics

Ms Stromberg summarised the present position in relation to the campus and the preparations that were in process. There was a good deal of local involvement, especially among young people who would be helping with the various tasks as necessary. Catering was still a problem, to a large extent due to the devaluation of the Zimbabwe dollar, but various possibilities were being explored and it was hoped to finalise arrangements shortly.

Regarding participants, fifteen churches had not nominated their delegates, while a number of those named had not yet completed their registration forms.

Parish visits on the first Sunday of the assembly had been requested by 150 churches, and the work involved in coordinating these visits was underway.

Regarding the presentation by Zimbabwe churches, they had decided to invite a Roman Catholic bishop from the Sudan to be the preacher. This would probably be the only occasion for a Roman Catholic to be visibly part of the assembly programme with the support of the Vatican.

Dr Tsetsis urged that the new Orthodox bishop should also be encouraged to take an active part.

The documents relative to the Assembly were referred to the Programme Sub-committee and to the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee.

At a later session, Ms Ritchie reported on behalf of the Programme Sub-committee. It recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**:

> *to receive the extensive report on Assembly Preparations with appreciation, including the paper entitled "**Preparing for Padare: Signposts for a Common Journey**" prepared for the Programme Book; the outline of the CUV plenaries and the other plenaries; and the outline of the Recommitment Service. Some suggestions for changes in the latter were noted for sharing with the Worship Committee.*
>
> *The Executive Committee further **agreed** that a response on behalf of the Executive Committee be prepared to the message of solidarity from the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, and to the pastoral letter published in March 1998 by the Heads of Christian Denominations in Zimbabwe, to be sent by the general secretary.*

Dr Raiser noted that a letter had also been received from the Roman Catholic bishops in Zimbabwe, and suggested that a response be sent to them also, expressing joy at this sign of ecumenical fellowship.

In addition, a response would be sent to the President of the Council of the EKD who had sent a letter of support on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the WCC, recognising the difficulties currently faced by both the churches and the Council, but pointing to the mast of the ecumenical ship which is the cross.

> (See also under Report of Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee, regarding Observers and Elections).

7. ORTHODOX PARTICIPATION IN THE WCC
The Current Situation: Issues and Ways Forward

Mr Lemopoulos began by expressing thanks to His Holiness Aram I for his support during this difficult period. He went on to introduce a paper[1] (see Appendix IV) prepared by the Orthodox Task Force, which took into consideration some of the developments since the Executive last met in February, notably the consultations held in Thessaloniki in April, and the pre-assembly Orthodox meeting in Damascus in May. The paper provided a careful analysis of what the Orthodox were telling the Council and the wider ecumenical family through their actions and words, and attempted to place the issues raised by the Orthodox in their broader context.

Mr Lemopoulos pointed out that the distinction affirmed in the context of CUV between the WCC as an instrument and as a fellowship had been at the heart of the discussions. He believed that, for too long, Orthodox concerns had been dealt with in terms of the WCC as a structure rather than as a fellowship of churches. If we were now to focus on the latter, it should be possible to identify the difficulties within the Orthodox churches and the potential for an open and creative dialogue between Orthodox and Protestant representatives within the Council.

In the ensuing discussion, Fr Hilarion explained that the Thessaloniki meeting was called at the request of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Serbian Orthodox Church. In view of the withdrawal from WCC membership of the Georgian Orthodox Church in 1997 and the announced withdrawal of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church more recently, it was clear that some common understanding of the situation was necessary in order to prevent further such actions.

Since the meeting there had been different interpretations as to its message. Fr Hilarion underlined that the main message was that the Orthodox would continue to participate in the ecumenical movement, whatever may be the outcome of discussions regarding WCC/Orthodox relations. This message should be regarded as a strong affirmation of Orthodox faithfulness to the ecumenical movement, and it was addressed not only to the WCC but to the wider ecumenical community.

During the Thessaloniki meeting, a suggestion was made that a Mixed Theological Commission (MTC) be created, constituted by Orthodox and WCC representatives, to

---

[1] This paper was sent to WCC member churches, members of Central Committee and other partners, with the General Secretary's letter reporting on this meeting of the Executive Committee.

discuss the future of Orthodox participation in the Council, and the future of the Council in terms of radical structural change. The ROC would participate in such a Commission.

The final decision about participation in the Harare Assembly would be taken by each individual Orthodox Church. Some would send a full delegation with a limited mandate, while others would send only one or two people.

With regard to the official position of the Russian Orthodox Church, Fr Hilarion explained the following compromise solution in relation to their participation in Central Committee. So far they had had five places on Central Committee, but in the period after Harare they were unlikely to take part in it. However, they wished to ask whether the assembly would reserve places for possible Central Committee members in the future. That meant that the ROC would remain a full member of the WCC but would suspend its participation in the governing bodies for the time being, meanwhile working actively in the proposed Mixed Theological Commission. Depending on the direction taken there, and should a satisfactory solution for the Orthodox be found, then the ROC would resume full participation in Central Committee.

If sessions of the Mixed Theological Commission were to take place immediately following a meeting of Central Committee, the ROC representatives might participate in CC as observers, and then take an active part in the MTC.

Concluding his remarks, Fr Hilarion pointed out that the position expressed by the Russian Orthodox Church was not an isolated one; these concerns were shared by other Orthodox and some non-Orthodox churches also.

Bishop Nifon said he had hoped that the Mixed Theological Commission could have met prior to this Executive Committee but it was clear that there had not been time to prepare adequately for such a meeting. He had no mandate from the Romanian Orthodox Church to say that they would not participate in the WCC assembly or in the governing bodies; with regard to voting, he believed that each should vote according to conscience. The Holy Synod wished to be faithful to its long ecumenical commitment over the years, nevertheless exercising flexibility about its participation in the assembly.

He noted that the Thessaloniki document also represented an attempt by the Orthodox authoritative bodies to defend themselves over against various schismatic movements and narrow-minded fundamentalist groups who regard everything that was not Orthodox as heretical.

Bishop Nifon urged members of the Executive to react to the paper so that the Orthodox could be aware of the views of their partners in the ecumenical movement, and for the

future to take seriously the appointment of members of the Mixed Theological Commission.

Dr Tsetsis referred to the fact that the Ecumenical Patriarchate had been part of the World Council since the very beginning in 1938, and even though they had faced difficulties and at times had felt the need to exercise constructive criticism, they had continued to acknowledge the positive aspects of the Council's work.

In their second response to CUV, the Ecumenical Patriarchate had asked four things:

a) clarification of the meaning of the term *koinonia*;
b) clarification of the nature of unity;
c) that ways of decision-making be found that do not hurt each other; (the fact that the Orthodox are in the minority in the governing bodies means that they can always be overruled by the majority Protestant members);
d) "that any structural changes related to the .. governing .. bodies of the WCC, as well as to the internal structure of its headquarters, should be implemented with discernment .. in order not to alter the main character of the Council." (Response of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the CUV draft, §20.)

Dr Tsetsis reiterated that the message of the Thessaloniki meeting was not as negative as it had appeared in the press; indeed the most positive paragraph vis à vis the WCC had unfortunately been omitted from the press release. Secondly, he affirmed that the issue was not so much with the WCC but with some Protestant member churches which were using the platform of the WCC to bring forward some controversial issues that were not in line with Orthodox priorities.

There was currently a certain inconsistency in the Orthodox Churches on their position vis à vis the ecumenical movement and in relation to the implementation of the Thessaloniki recommendations, and different interpretations had been made about sending delegations to Harare. Dr Tsetsis believed that participation at Harare was vital, and he affirmed that the Ecumenical Patriarchate was sending a delegation, had proposed members for committees, and had applied for Padare presentations.

Fr Kishkovsky warned members of the Executive against attaching too much importance to the divergences in the interpretations of the different Orthodox churches with regard to the Thessaloniki meeting. He believed that fundamentally, beneath these differences of approach, there was a real consensus about Orthodox participation, but also about the difficulties for their involvement.

On the other hand, there was truth in the assessments made over the years that - for

historical reasons, not through ill will - much of the energy and intellectual climate and theological structures that led to the formation of the Council did come from churches in the West, and the Orthodox began to participate in the margins of the movement. For this reason there was some discomfort on the part of the Orthodox, leading to different approaches as to how to move forward to Harare and beyond. What was critically important was to pay attention to the critique, the substance of the matter as presented over the years, most recently by Thessloniki and by the OTF document. Over the decades, the Orthodox had not felt that the arena of the WCC was one in which there was an equality of different approaches. Part of the fault lay with them because they did not engage as fully as they might have done, but part of it also lay with the structure and atmosphere of the World Council.

Clearly the Harare Assembly would not be able to solve all the problems currently being faced; it might even add some new ones. Unless Harare gave an adequate sign that these concerns of the Orthodox would be addressed constructively, the erosion of Orthodox membership in the Council would continue - and that would serve both sides badly. Together we must find a way forward at Harare.

In spite of being involved in the World Council since the Church and Society conference of 1966, and of having had many opportunities to share and be with the Orthodox, Dr Tolen said he had still not succeeded in really understanding them fully. He agreed with the comments about participation and the way debates were conducted, because the predominant culture in the Council was that of the Reformed Presbyterian - Western - way of doing things. So it was not always easy to participate. But this was not just an Orthodox problem - any other group from another culture may well feel they were not part of what was going on either, and would thus have the same problem. He acknowledged that the Council had tried to leave ways open for others to participate, but these had not always been taken up. So it was a common responsibility.

In Dr Tolen's perception, the Orthodox had an understanding of the church which to some extent made it difficult for them to move towards a decision which has to be voted on. In Thessaloniki a *modus vivendi* was worked out by which the Orthodox would stay and have discussions with the Council. But he asked: how can you say you are a member of a body if you do not participate in it? If you are a member, you have an obligation to participate. Dr Tolen agreed that the Council must make every effort to understand the problems, but he warned the Orthodox not to press too hard, for then there might be a danger that the Council would no longer try to understand.

Dr Kässmann regretted the Orthodox decision not to take part in prayers at the assembly. In her view, the deepest feeling of hurt among Protestants was not being able to pray together, and one of the deepest learning processes had been that of praying together.

Dr Kässmann referred to the crisis in the EKD in the 1970s and the threats made at that time to leave the Council because of the Programme to Combat Racism. The crisis was resolved because *koinonia* was more important than any crisis. One church did suspend its membership for a time but had taken it up again later. She was grateful for all the efforts made among Orthodox and Protestants to try and stay together and resolve the present crisis, but she felt that if there came a point where it was not possible to worship together, everything else would for her be finished.

Mr Briggs testified that his church - the Baptist Church in England and Wales - had a particular understanding of the situation: because it had remained a member of the WCC in the midst of criticism from conservative anti-ecumenical elements, it had lost 10% of its churches.

Underlining the important of the Orthodox presence in the Council, he referred to conversations taking place between Orthodox and Evangelicals in Eastern Europe. He hoped that some of the WCC member churches would refrain from pushing the radical agenda too much but would have some sensitivity as to what may be painful for others. *Koinonia* was at the heart of the problem.

Fr Kishkovsky agreed that there had been an increase in fundamentalist attitudes, but he urged that the issue not be reduced to that: it did require our reflection and ecumenical response.

Mr Rantakari spoke of the enrichment brought to the Council by the Orthodox Churches. If some members or partners within a fellowship did not feel at home, this had both an intellectual and emotional impact. Some of the concerns were not expressed only by Orthodox colleagues. In all humility, there should be critical examination of the issues on both sides. It would be sad if we came to the assembly divided, and we should do our utmost to see what can be done to prepare ourselves for the next millennium. Meanwhile some action should be taken in response to the recommendations in the OTF paper.

Bishop Zacharias called on the Orthodox to re-think their decision and to participate fully in the assembly. But he realised their grievances were basic and fundamental and he urged that a decision be made to find a way to listen to these grievances and to make the necessary modifications that would be acceptable, in consultation with other churches who felt similar concerns.

Dr Santana also shared the feelings of frustration at being misunderstood. Those who had experienced what it was to be outside had learned that the only way to combat this was by staying inside: once outside, you were lost. The fact that the situation we were facing had been presented as Orthodox and WCC, you and us, had not helped at all. The

assumption of specific positions was always a risk, resulting in pain and suffering and separation from others. But a decision had to be made as to whether the risk was worth taking or not. If there were to be a second Thessaloniki meeting before Harare, then the Council should seek ways to influence that process.

The Moderator agreed that we were part of one family, one ecumenical fellowship, and - as within any family - disagreements, frustrations, internal tensions were natural. Therefore we must help each other as partners and talk to each other as partners.

Before embarking on a process of theological dialogue, the Moderator called on Protestant partners to help the Orthodox maintain their unity and to increase the level of their participation in the life and witness of the WCC. He therefore had a clear course of action to propose. The text of this proposal was referred to the Programme Sub-committee for study and recommendation, and was subsequently adopted by the Executive Committee (see below).

Dr Tsetsis felt the Moderator's proposal was fair, and acceptable as an interim solution. He warned that if the Orthodox did not take their place in assembly bodies, the agenda would be set by the Protestants. The new Central Committee would have to shape the future structure and programme for the coming years - and if the Orthodox were not present they could not have any say in this. It was clear that any major change could not take place before the Ninth Assembly

Dr Best urged that any discussion on the floor of the assembly be very carefully prepared. Secondly, she emphasised the need for the Orthodox to take part, particularly in the Hearings, otherwise they may find themselves unable to accept what had been discussed simply because they were not present to express their views.

The General Secretary expressed appreciation for the analysis in the OTF document and for the helpful discussion that had taken place. He proposed that the document be shared with the Orthodox member churches, together with the actions agreed by this Executive. Staff would also ensure that member churches from the Protestant side were informed prior to discussions at the assembly.

It was not yet certain whether a second Thessaloniki meeting would take place; he had hoped that the process begun in Antelias could have continued at the same informal level. But he believed the way was still open to establish a network of informed and committed participants in an assembly debate to ensure that the assembly take constructive action.

The document and the Moderator's proposal for action were referred to the Programme Sub-committee.

Reporting at a later session on behalf of the Sub-committee, Ms Ritchie invited Dr Tsetsis to present the text of the proposal made by the Moderator. This had been considered carefully by the Sub-committee which recommended its approval by the Executive.

In discussion, it was pointed out that the procedure mentioned in relation to nominations in respect of Orthodox delegates should be shared with member churches before the assembly and be officially confirmed by the assembly, in order to avoid any challenge when it came to the election of the Central Committee. Dr Raiser believed that the wording was an acceptable interpretation of the constitutional provisions, but it should be clearly stated and understood by the assembly. The Moderator suggested that member churches be requested to share this understanding with their delegates. The text would go from the Executive to the Business Committee at the beginning of the assembly.

Should the two CUV sessions not be sufficient to allow for discussion on Orthodox participation in the Council, the Business Committee would have to consider making provision for more space - perhaps even for a special hearing in the context of Padare, since it may not require attendance by the whole assembly.

Dr Raiser further underlined the need to clarify the concept of the proposed "Mixed Theological Commission" - its mandate, who would appoint it, to whom it would report, who should receive and act on its recommendations, and the timelines within which it should work. The staff group would consider the matter further and report back to the Executive in December.

The Executive Committee **agreed** to the following text as amended:

1. The Executive Committee expressed its deep appreciation for the comprehensive presentation and realistic assessment of the current situation pertaining to Orthodox participation in the WCC; the Executive Committee asked the General Secretary to consider ways of sharing the report on "Orthodox Participation in the WCC - The Current Situation; Issues and Ways Forward" with member churches, together with a record of the discussions and decisions of the Executive Committee, and encouraged the staff to pursue in-house dialogue along the lines suggested in this report;

2. After hearing the report on "Orthodox participation in the WCC", the Executive Committee noted the complexity of the present stage of Orthodox participation in the WCC and affirmed the necessity to deal with the current situation responsibly and seriously, and with a clear commitment to maintaining the integrity of the Council's fellowship;

3. The Executive Committee welcomed the initiative taken by the Officers early in May 1998 to respond immediately and positively to the proposal made by the Thessaloniki meeting of the Eastern Orthodox Churches to set up a "Mixed Theological Commission" to deal together with the representatives of the WCC with all issues and questions concerning the Orthodox presence and participation in the life and witness of the WCC. The Executive Committee affirmed the vital importance and immediate necessity of continuing with renewed commitment the process of dialogue with the Orthodox Churches.

4. In order to provide a space for an active and meaningful Orthodox participation in the Assembly and to facilitate dialogue and interaction among WCC member churches during the Assembly, the Executive Committee proposed that:

   (a) both the Moderator and the General Secretary, in their reports to the Assembly, refer to the present state of WCC-Orthodox relations, emphasizing the importance of an active Orthodox participation in the life and witness of the WCC;
   (b) in the context of the CUV discussions in the Assembly, adequate time be given for the articulation of Orthodox concerns;
   (c) during the Assembly, all issues concerning the relations between the WCC and the Orthodox churches be referred to the Policy Reference Committee I;
   (d) the Assembly, in its turn, affirm the decisive importance of Orthodox participation in all aspects of the Council's life and witness, and strongly recommend that the "Mixed Theological Commission" seriously address all issues related to Orthodox participation in the life of the WCC;
   (e) taking into consideration the complexity, sensitivity and critical nature of the prevailing situation on the one hand, and in order to provide ample time and space for an efficient and active Orthodox participation in the governing bodies of the Council, the Executive Committee reaffirmed earlier procedures and understandings regarding the nomination of delegates to the new Central Committee from all Orthodox Churches; and urged the Orthodox Churches which are present at the assembly to provide a complete list of nominees to the Assembly Nominations Committee - if necessary, including interim representatives from other Orthodox Churches pending nominations from those Orthodox Churches which do not feel able at this point to participate in the Central Committee.

5. With regard to the Assembly Committees, the Executive Committee agreed to go along with all appointments/nominations including the delegates of the Orthodox member churches in all committees.

8. RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Mr Lemopoulos introduced a memorandum prepared by staff for internal discussion with regard to recent statements of the Roman Catholic Church. He also referred to the Seventh Report of the Joint Working Group, (which had been circulated), which gave an account of the fruitful developments in the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church - particularly as represented by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity - and the World Council of Churches and its member churches. This collaboration was contributing to the growing *koinonia* between the churches. But in the light of this positive advance in the pilgrimage towards the visible unity of the church, certain recent developments had caused concern to some WCC member churches and to the Council itself, since they appeared to be a cause of stumbling on the path to unity.

These matters represented a certain development by some instances in the RCC with regard to the understanding of dialogue, respect of the dialogue and the qualifying partners in dialogue. Not only the results of the dialogue, but even the nature of the partner in the dialogue, were being questioned seriously, and this was an issue for concern. Another matter for concern was in relation to the nature of collaboration at regional level through the REOs.

Given the recent new developments, it would seem important to look further at the nature and method of dialogue, because what the JWG might say on the subject could be of importance for future ecumenical dialogue.

Possible action by the Executive might include commending the JWG report to the assembly together with Cardinal Cassidy's positive response to it. Some concern could be expressed about the new developments, and a sharpening of the agenda for the JWG as suggested in the report could be endorsed.

Responding to a question about the effect of the present 'centralising' tendency of the RCC on the REOs, Dr Raiser noted that the three REOs with full Roman Catholic membership (Pacific, Caribbean and Middle East) were all experiencing difficulties. There was indication of the impact of this centralising tendency at regional level, but less so at national level. Discussions had also taken place with LWF which is affected by the RCC response to the joint Declaration on Justification.

The Memorandum was referred to the Programme Sub-committee.

At a later session, Ms Ritchie reported on behalf of the Sub-committee which recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**

1. to **receive** the Seventh Report of the Joint Working Group with appreciation;

2. to **request** the Officers to write to Cardinal Cassidy thanking him for his response and making suggestions for future work of the Joint Working Group;

3 taking into consideration the wider ecumenical implications of recent statements of the RCC, to **ask** the Policy Reference Committee I at the assembly to ensure that the JWG be requested to re-emphasise in its agenda for the period 1998-2005 issues relating to:

   a) the nature, purpose and methods of dialogue;
   b) the nature of regional and national ecumenical organisations;

4. to **ask** the Programme Guidelines Committee to suggest that Faith and Order, as part of its study on the nature and purpose of the Church, take up again its earlier studies on:

   a) the nature and structure of "authority" and "teaching authority" in the church,
   b) the relation between the Church "local" and "universal".

9. FORUM OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND ECUMENICAL ORGANISATIONS

Mr van Beek introduced a paper written by the general secretary as a working document for a group who met in Geneva in late August to discuss the proposal for a Forum of Christian Churches and Ecumenical Organisations which had emerged in the course of the reflection on a "Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC".

The working draft of the policy statement on CUV, circulated to member churches and ecumenical partner bodies in December 1996, included a chapter on a proposed "Forum of Christian Churches and Ecumenical Organisations". Responses were not very specific and indicated the need for further development and clarification. It was clear that more time was needed to clarify the scope of such a Forum before any decision could be made. Actions of the Executive and Central Committees during 1997 led to a process of consultation initiated after the CC meeting involving the main prospective partners.

Since full participation of the Roman Catholic Church had been considered to be important for the Forum to achieve its objectives, special attention was given to

consultation with the appropriate authorities on the Roman Catholic side. In its response to CUV, the Pontifical Council of Promoting Christian Unity had already commented on the Forum proposal, and subsequently expressed readiness to participate in a process of exploring in greater detail the validity of this proposal.

After further discussion, the PCPCU underlined that the Forum should not become a new organisation with its own administration and policy setting. Yet it should be distinguished structurally from the WCC. Its main purpose should be to coordinate better the different levels and expressions of the ecumenical movement and thus to further the goal of visible unity. It should remain flexible and begin on a small experimental basis. The PCPCU expressed readiness to participate in further informal discussions with other possible partners.

Consultations with other ecumenical partners showed a basically positive attitude regarding the Forum proposal and the desire to be part of further exploration. The general feeling was that the Forum be an open space for encounter and dialogue, with participation mainly by Christian churches and ecumenical organisations which are related to and recognised by churches. Most of those consulted encouraged the WCC to take the initiative of convening a small informal meeting of key partners in order to take the discussion beyond bilateral contacts.

Following the action of the Executive Committee in February 1998 encouraging *"further exploration of issues as well as the calling of a consultation to examine the proposal in more detail with key partners"*, plans for a small consultation were developed which took place at Bossey in late August 1998.

Mr van Beek reported that participants felt the Forum should be a place to meet and consult, that is, not a place to make decisions, nor where a gathering of Christians would come together to speak on behalf of world Christianity. It should be a place where those meeting would do so in mutual respect to discuss issues on the agenda of the churches and partner bodies in the ecumenical movement. Every effort should be made to make the range of participating partners as wide as possible: including CWCs, REOs, the Roman Catholic Church, Evangelicals, Pentecostals, etc.

Two main emphases would be on the agenda of such a Forum: the challenges of the world that the churches have to confront and respond to, and issues of Christian unity. It was felt that both these emphases should be present on the agenda and kept in balance. A first preparatory meeting of a Continuation Committee would take place early in 1999 to establish an Organising Committee to start planning a first full meeting of the Forum, possibly in the year 2001.

A number of questions were raised for clarification. Dr Tsetsis reminded the Executive that the idea of a Forum had emerged after discussions about the future of the assembly. The concept of the assembly had been retained, but the idea of participation of non-member churches in such a Forum had also been kept in mind.

Dr Raiser affirmed that the assumption had always been that the WCC continue as a council of churches but would itself become a participant in such a Forum, recognising that there is a wider network of ecumenical bodies who share a significant part of the ecumenical agenda. He pointed out that this was no longer a WCC document - it was addressed to the WCC and to all the other partners involved with the request that it make a response to the proposal. It was expected that the paper would be submitted to the assembly; this Executive might wish to give some guidance on the way in which it should be dealt with there.

Dr Best, who had attended the August meeting, emphasised that this was not to be seen as a WCC programme; the Council was being asked to give an opinion on the proposal.

Mr Lemopoulos felt that an advantage of the proposal was that it required participation, not membership. This was something new in that it avoids entering structural language and the obstacles that that brings. He noted that those present at the consultation represented the most inclusive picture of the one ecumenical movement, but no structure or constitution could do justice to such a group.

The documents were referred to the Programme Sub-committee.

At a later session, Ms Ritchie reported on the behalf of the Sub-committee. It recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**,

> *to receive with appreciation the proposals regarding a Forum of Christian Churches and Ecumenical Organisations (Appendix V) and refer it to Policy Reference Committee I at the Assembly.*

10. PUBLIC ISSUES

Rev. Dwain Epps introduced a background paper reporting on the main initiatives taken in the period since February. In the area of Church-State and Ecumenical Relations, visits had been made to member churches in Taiwan and China; to the Democratic Republic of Congo for a meeting of church leaders; to Romania for meetings with State religious affairs officials; to a consultation in Berlin on church-state relations in the

former socialist countries of Europe; South Korea, and Irian Jaya. Other activities had included further work on the Programme to Overcome Violence; on issues relating to Disarmament, Human Rights, Decolonization, and conflict resolution, especially in relation to Sudan, the Great Lakes region of Africa, and Colombia.

Reference was made to a number of significant trends, such as the increase of religious and ethnic intolerance especially in Pakistan, Mexico, Guatemala, Indonesia, Sudan; the civil unrest arising from the global monetary crisis and the civil upheavals it had occasioned in many Asian and African countries. The nuclear tests in India and Pakistan were addressed, expressing concern that these could give rise to a dangerous new arms race in the Asian region and beyond.

Encouraging signs of hope for peace could be found in Northern Ireland, Bougainville and Korea.

Further threats to peace were of particular concern in the Democratic Republic of Congo where the conflict was involving troops from several other Southern and Central African countries. A detailed analysis of this situation was set out in the document, including the text of a comprehensive outline of conditions for a solution to the immediate conflict provided by the UN Security Council on 31 August 1998. Hopes that a cease-fire had been agreed among the different parties did not materialise, and further negotiations were stalemated. More troops were joining the conflict, and as is all such cases, it was the civilians who were suffering the most.

The issues of terrorism and retaliation was also discussed in the document, comparing the responses to the Omagh bombing in Northern Ireland, and the bombings of American Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, which were answered by retaliatory raids on sites in the Sudan and Afghanistan.

An ecumenical delegation had participated in the annual meeting of the UN Commission on Human Rights. As the Assembly would be meeting on 10 December when the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is celebrated around the world, a special event is planned in the context of the Padare. It was proposed that a formal Declaration by the Assembly be made on that occasion, a draft of which had been prepared by CCIA and was being presented to the Executive Committee for approval for submission to the Assembly.

Public Issues at the Eighth Assembly

It was proposed that the Executive Committee recommend to the assembly that the Committee on Public Issues be asked to elaborate on existing ecumenical policy in the field of human rights, and to prepare a statement on the status of Jerusalem. Immediately

prior to the assembly, the Executive may consider it necessary to address other urgent issues, and it was likely that further concerns would be proposed for consideration at the assembly itself.

In addition to the declaration on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to be issued during a special session of the Padare on 10 December, the Executive Committee was asked to review and authorise staff to proceed with a memorandum providing background material and an outline of a statement be drafted by staff and discussed and finalised by the Public Issues Committee for adoption by the assembly.

The Executive Committee was further requested to consider and approve the elaboration of background material and the elements of a statement on the Status of Jerusalem, presented in draft form. This should also be presented to the Assembly for adoption.

In discussion, Ms Santana expressed appreciation for the support received in respect to the decolonisation of Puerto Rico. She pointed out that 10 December 1998 was not only Human Rights Day, but also marked 100 years since the signing of the Treaty of Paris, when Spain ceded Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines to the United States.

Dr Kässmann felt that the Assembly should make some kind of statement on Africa in response to the Africa plenary and asked for advice on what might be the best way of handling this. Dr Raiser believed it would be appropriate if the declaration prepared for the conclusion of the Africa plenary be considered as a statement of the African participants at the Assembly. It should be referred to Policy Reference Committee II which should formulate a response on behalf of the assembly. A similar procedure could be followed in relation to the declaration by women on the end of the Decade.

With regard to Jerusalem, the Moderator stressed that in view of the complexity and sensitivity of this matter, and in view of a growing international interest in the status of Jerusalem, what was said at the assembly should not reflect the policy of the WCC: rather, it would be important to develop a common basis for future dialogue among the partners involved. If the WCC were to try to reach a clear policy on the future status of Jerusalem, he felt it would put itself in a difficult situation. Therefore he proposed that, in the period up to the assembly, there be further consultation with the MECC and churches in the region. Anything the Council said at the Assembly must have the agreement of the member churches in the region.

The draft texts and the background material on public issues were referred to the Public Issues Committee and the Programme Sub-committee for appropriate action.

At a later session, Ms Ritchie presented the report of the Programme Sub-committee, which proposed the following actions:

The Executive Committee

1. **agreed** that specific actions on human rights and on the status of Jerusalem be recommended to the Assembly through the Committee on Public Issues, and encouraged staff to develop further the drafts of a Memorandum and Recommendations on Ecumenical Policy on Human Rights and of a Statement on the Status of Jerusalem for review by the Executive Committee at its meeting immediately prior to the Assembly. These actions should:

a) draw upon, and reassert relevant WCC policy in these areas adopted by previous assemblies and develop them further in the light of subsequent developments, and
b) be developed in consideration, as appropriate, with member churches and regional bodies directly affected.

2. **recognised** that delegates to the Assembly may recommend the elaboration of further statements on public issues through the established procedures.

3. **recommended** that elements for a statement articulating the Assembly's response to the declaration of commitment to be presented at the conclusion of the Africa Plenary be elaborated and submitted to Policy Reference Committee II for completion.

4. **proposed** the following Draft Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for submission to the Assembly Business Committee with the recommendation that the Assembly adopt it during its first or second business session.

Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
adopted by the Third General Assembly of the United Nations
Paris, 10 December 1948

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which

human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, therefore,
The General Assembly,

Proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

DECLARATION OF THE EIGHTH ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES ON THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADOPTION OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The first WCC Assembly in Amsterdam fifty years ago had high hopes for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights under discussion by the United Nations at that time. As we, representatives of churches in over one hundred countries, gathered here in Harare

on 10 December 1998 in the Eighth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, reconsider the words of the Preamble, we find that they are be as pertinent and challenging today as they were when they were adopted.

We remember with gratitude those who advocated on behalf of the ecumenical fellowship at the San Francisco Conference in 1945 the inclusion within the United Nations Charter of provisions for human rights, including a special Commission on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms to develop and implement guarantees for religious freedom and other rights.

We are thankful to those whose faith and vision contributed to the shaping and adoption of this common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. We remember those all around the world who have dedicated their lives to the further development of these rights, in order that there be a progressive subordination of force to the international rule of law.

We hear the cries of the victims of human rights violations, and feel their anger, frustrations, agony, loneliness, desperation and pain. We remember particularly those Christians and people of other faiths and convictions around the world who have suffered persecution and martyrdom in defense of human rights.

We recognize that in some languages the use of masculine terminology in the original wording of the Declaration would appear to exclude women. Nevertheless, women as well as men today find in the Declaration a foundation for their hopes and aspirations. The adoption of this Universal Declaration stands as one of the landmark achievements of humanity.

Most governments have now committed themselves to respect its provisions, but we are painfully aware that these principles have yet to receive universal observance. As a result of poverty, ignorance, exploitation and repression, very many people remain unaware that they are invested with such inalienable rights. More still are unable to exercise them.

As Christians, we believe that God created every person infinitely precious and endowed with equal dignity and rights. Yet we confess that we have often failed to respect such equality, even in our own midst. We have not always stood up courageously for those whose rights and human dignity are threatened or violated by discrimination, intolerance, prejudice and hatred. Indeed Christians have sometimes been agents of such injustice.

The World Council of Churches has affirmed that human rights, including the right

to religious freedom, are not to be claimed by any religion, nation or group as an exclusive privilege, but rather that the enjoyment of these rights is essential in order to serve the whole of humanity. Yet we are aware that universal human rights have been repeatedly violated or misused in pursuit of particular religious, ideological, national, ethnic and racial interests.

In this Jubilee Assembly of the World Council of Churches held under the theme, "Turn to God, Rejoice in Hope," we continue to pursue the goal of unity for the Church and the whole of humankind.

We look forward with hope and reaffirm our the faith that God will continue to guide us and give us strength to confront the potent forces of division, dehumanization and social exclusion which assail us today.

In this spirit, we recommit ourselves to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and to promote and defend them in a way which takes into account:

the values and insights into human rights and dignity derived from the rich heritage of peoples' religions, cultures and traditions;

the rights of peoples, nations, communities and their cultures, as well as the rights of each individual within them;

the indivisibility of human rights, including social, economic and cultural, civil and political rights, and the rights to peace, to development and the integrity of the Creation;

the right of every person and community, be they in the majority or in the minority, to participate fully in decisions about their common future;

the equal rights of young and old, of children and adults, of women and men, and of all persons irrespective of their origin or condition.

We commit ourselves to pursue this goal in a way which does not further divide, but rather unites the human community through:

encouraging and supporting the efforts of the United Nations;

urging our governments to ratify and respect international and regional instruments for the promotion and protection of human rights, to monitor compliance with them in their own countries and around the world, and to

underwrite that commitment with human and financial resources;

seeking cooperation with peoples of other faiths and convictions;

joining in partnerships with other civil society groups and organizations, and with governments and political authorities who share these aims.

This we do for the benefit of the present generation which desperately needs universal respect for and the exercise of the full range of human rights. We undertake these commitments especially for the children and youth of today, that they may take hope and claim the promise of the future. We do it so that the world in which we are among God's stewards will be passed on to future generations resting upon the firm foundations of freedom, justice and peace.

11. REVISION OF BY-LAWS

In view of the decision to re-create commissions "to advise the Central Committee, through the Programme Committee, in areas of constitutional responsibility of the Council", it was reported that four commissions were envisaged in areas where the WCC was related to partners outside its formal constituency, or to areas where the WCC was the trustee of a historic stream which was incorporated into the Council: Faith and Order, Mission and Evangelism, International Affairs, and Education; in addition the Bossey Board would continue its responsibility in relation to the Ecumenical Institute.

Dr Raiser introduced a paper setting out draft texts for these four commissions and the Bossey Board which had been worked out in correspondence between the coordinators of the future teams and the constituencies concerned.

Faith and Order by-laws were subject to a specific process of revision: the draft had been submitted to members of the outgoing Faith and Order Board whose comments had been incorporated into the draft text; this would now be shared with members of the Plenary Commission and only after their comments had been received could they be finalised. Members of the new Faith and Order Standing Commission must be appointed at Harare; other commissions would only be appointed by Central Committee in August 1999.

Regarding Mission and Evangelism, a group would meet early in 1999 to receive comments from affiliated bodies and prepare a text for approval.

Dr Raiser explained that these texts would be referred to the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee for review and recommendation. It was hoped that the Executive would

give provisional approval to the revised by-laws so that they can be used as a basis for appointing the new commissions; the texts would then be submitted to Central Committee in August 1999 for final approval.

At a later session, Dr Nababan presented the report of the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee which recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**

to give provisional approval to the draft texts of by-laws for commissions and Bossey Board, noting that final changes were still to be worked out with the relevant partners. The Central Committee in August 1999 would take a final decision on the matter.

12. REPORT OF PROGRAMME SUB-COMMITTEE

A. Relationships with Regional Ecumenical Organisations (REOs)

A background paper outlining the history of the formation of REOs, and giving a summary of developments since the Canberra Assembly with regard to REOs and the WCC, had been shared, and was given consideration by the Programme Sub-committee. On the recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee **agreed**:

- *to receive with appreciation the document on Relationships with REOs, which builds on the CUV approach, and to encourage*
  1) *the WCC and REOs to engage in a process of reflection on a common ecumenical agenda and the nature of the integration of global and regional structural expressions of the ecumenical movement this would require (taking into account also other processes, e.g. with the Orthodox and in relation to the Forum);*
  2) *the WCC and REOs to design ways of consultation and decision on the division of responsibilities for ecumenical programmes;*
  3) *consideration of ways of representation of the REOs on the Central Committee;*
  4) *the exploration of a mechanism whereby members of WCC and REO governing bodies from the same region could meet at least once in between two WCC Assemblies;*
  5) *consultation with the REOs on the work of the Joint Working Group with the PCPCU, taking into account the regional cooperation between some of the REOs and the Roman Catholic Church;*
  6) *the WCC and REOs to develop a common approach to relationships with Evangelical and Pentecostal churches and organisations.*

- *The Executive Committee further* ***agreed*** *to refer the document together with the above-mentioned actions to Policy Reference Committee I at the Assembly.*

B. Programme Report

This report was presented by Ms Lundy. It provided a detailed summary of the Council's work since the beginning of the year 1998, which of necessity had proceeded on different levels with a view to preparing for the future internal reorganisation. The Units and Offices had been involved in bringing their current programmes to a conclusion, while at the same time the majority of staff had been working intensively on the various aspects of assembly preparation.

After studying the report in detail, the Programme Sub-committee recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**, *to receive the Programme report with appreciation.*

C. Globalisation

Mr Kobia introduced a paper describing the main activities that had taken place in relation to globalisation. The WCC had assumed responsibility for facilitating and enabling the dialogue on the meanings, risks and challenges of globalisation, in order to equip the churches in their responses to this new global reality. The analysis was centred around the political, economic and cultural challenges. Contacts had been made in relation to activities in different parts of the world, including seminars, workshops, theological reflections, and so on, and the issue was energising a large number of initiatives at local, national and international levels.

The WCC programme on globalisation was organised around three foci: (1) faith communities and social movements in society; (2) theology and economy; and (3) globalisation, ethics and oikoumene. A wide range of activities was taking place.

Plans were in hand for a special Hearing on Globalisation at the Assembly to identify the nature of the challenge of globalisation for the churches and the ecumenical movement and to suggest keys to alternative global visions. In addition, three seminars were planned in the context of the Padare, addressing critical issues on globalisation.

After careful study of the paper, the Programme Sub-committee recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**,

to receive the report on Globalisation, and express its support for plans being developed for a special hearing on the subject at the Assembly. A draft of an assembly statement on Globalisation would be presented to the Executive Committee at its meeting in December.

D. Future status and structure of Ecumenical News International (ENI)

In February 1997 the Executive Committee had agreed upon terms of reference for the Advisory Board of ENI which set out arrangements for the governance of ENI (minutes, pp.29-31) under the existing WCC structure. The Board had examined what further actions may be needed for the governance of ENI in view of the new WCC structure. Advice was currently being sought from the WCC's legal advisers; once that was received, a formal proposal would be presented to the four sponsoring bodies of ENI.

The Sub-committee recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**,

to receive the report on the future status and structure of Ecumenical News International (ENI) and encourage the ENI staff and Board to continue exploration of its future status, in discussion with its other sponsors, as outlined in the report.

E. Resolution on the ACT Network

In the interests of coordination of the global emergency response of the Protestant and Orthodox churches, the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) established in August 1995 a joint coordination unit - the ACT Coordinating Office - and a single humanitarian aid network under the name Action by Churches Together (ACT). In so doing, the two bodies agreed to evaluate the progress of ACT after a two year period, in order to assess its effectiveness and determine whether or not to continue under a coordinated emergency mechanism.

After reviewing the ACT Network Evaluation at its meeting in March 1998, the ACT Emergency Committee made a number of requests to the WCC. After careful consideration of these, the Programme Sub-commitee decided to recommend, and the Executive Committee **agreed:**

- to note that ACT was viewed by the overwhelming majority of its members as a successful joint venture;
- to approve the recommendation of the ACT executive committee. based on the findings of the evaluation, to continue the ACT Coordinating Office and Network;
- to reaffirm the WCC's commitment to continue, in joint responsibility with LWF, to provide the institutional base within which the ACT Coordinating Office can operate;
- to support the continuing improvement of the ACT Network including the evolving improvement of the governance, line management and its structural expression;
- to endorse efforts by the ACT Emergency Committee to implement recommendations arising from the evaluation:

to strengthen the role of the ACT Coordinating Office in assuring a high quality of emergency response,
to give priority investment to the need for capacity building in disaster relief by national and local implementors;
to enhance awareness, participation and ownership of the ACT network by its member churches.

Dr Tolen was glad that this joint venture with the LWF was proving a success, in spite of some initial resistance among the LWF constituency. He hoped that the present arrangement would help the two bodies to continue working together, using one voice, one appeal, and giving priority to capacity building.

F. Progress Report on the WCC Multilateral Agreement on Investments Initiative

Following the decision of the Executive Committee at its meeting in February 1998 to share information on the ongoing OECD negotiations on a Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI) with member churches and ecumenical organisations, it was reported that an encouraging new process had begun. The information prepared for the Executive was circulated with a covering letter from the general secretary, and a dossier on the MAI was prepared and sent to churches in the 29 OECD member countries. Ongoing discussions on investment liberalisation in the context of OECD, WTO and UNCTAD, as well as strategy meetings of NGOs, were monitored.

Mr Kobia said that a number of responses had been received, as well as requests for more information. Meanwhile, discussions on MAI had intensified and a number of MAI and investment related meetings had been held in recent months.

In view of the demand for WCC involvement, acting as a global focal point for networking, research, information and advocacy, there was a need to build a process linking churches and ecumenical groups, and to do coordinated research, training and work on theological signposts/criteria.

Ms Odonkor expressed appreciation to the WCC for drawing attention to this issue and for providing helpful documentation. Any further such material would be appreciated as it became available. Mr Kobia affirmed that a second dossier was under preparation.

Bishop Gomez said he had tried to bring the Council's viewpoint to the attention of bishops at the Lambeth Conference, and was disappointed that the statement adopted there followed the line taken by OECD. Considerable discussion was however taking place on the issue in the Caribbean.

The progress report and copies of correspondence from the general secretary of OECD were considered by the Programme Sub-committee. It recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**,

to receive the Progress Report on the WCC-MAI (Multilateral Agreement on Investments) Initiative and express support for further work as indicated.

G. Draft statement: Let the Trumpet Sound: A Jubilee call to end the stranglehold of Debt on impoverished people

Ms Blyth presented the draft statement, noting that it was still in process of being completed. It began by explaining that in spite of many previous statements on the debt issue, the situation had become even more critical than before, especially in view of the recent collapse of economies in Asia, Russia and Latin America. The context of the debt debate had become even more complicated, and this fact must be recognised. The Central Committee statement at Buenos Aires in 1985 made a relationship between economic debt and the social consequences such as world hunger, but more could be said now about the economic and ecological factors, as well as about the underlying ethical and moral problems.

What could be said that was new? An attempt to give new emphasis to the building of mutual responsibility and partnership. It was not simply a matter of debt cancellation per se, but the need to recognise mutual responsibility, to find a new quality of mediation and dialogue. How did dialogue impact discussions with international financial institutions, for example? What could we say about the global ethic of self-limitation? Instruments of mediation had so far proved insufficient. Now was the time to stress the harmonisation of relationships between people, and between creation and the Creator.

The debt situation was getting worse, but it could not be looked at apart from human rights. Finally, it was important to elaborate the affirmations: what can a call to action mean for the churches? What can participants do about it? What can they take home with them? Ms Blyth urged the Executive to help in formulating a concrete call to action.

Dr Kässmann noted that the Jubilee campaign had started in the UK and that some 270 church groups had joined in, so the movement was growing. What could the WCC do as an international body in relation to this campaign? Ms Blyth felt that people should be encouraged to involve themselves in existing campaigns rather than starting additional new initiatives.

Dr Tolen referred to the Malaga consultation in April on Jubilee and Foreign Debt, which had begun the task of developing a joint statement by the churches at Harare. Some of the most indebted countries had stressed the need to speak about the responsibility of those

who have contracted the debts and how they have dealt with the situation; it would be immoral simply to "lift the debts".

The draft text was referred to the Programme Sub-committee.

At a later session, Ms Ritchie reported on behalf of the Sub-committee which, having considered the draft statement "Let the Trumpet Sound", recommended that *it be used as a framework for an eventual statement on international debt by the Assembly.* The Executive Committee **agreed**.

13. REPORT OF STAFFING AND NOMINATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

The report of the Sub-committee was presented by Dr Nababan. In a closed session, the Staffing Report was considered and the recommendations accepted:

A. Staffing Report

The Executive Committee **authorised** the General Secretary to proceed with the following appointments and contract extensions, the legal obligations of the World Council of Churches to be binding only as from the actual signing by both parties of the corresponding contracts or contract extensions.

I APPOINTMENTS

Cluster on Issues and Themes: Team on Mission and Evangelism

- **Dr Manoj Kurian** (Malaysia, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church) be appointed Executive Secretary for Health and Healing for four years from an agreed date
- **Father Kwame Labi** (Ghana, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and all Africa [Eastern]) be appointed Executive Secretary for Community and Justice in Mission for four years from an agreed date

Team on Justice, Peace and Creation

- **Dr John Lamola** (South Africa, Baptist Church of Southern Africa) be appointed Executive Secretary for Economy and Justice for four years from an agreed date

Cluster on Relations and Constituencies: Team on Regional Relations

- **Dr Marina Rizk** (Syria, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East [Eastern]) be appointed Executive Secretary for the Middle East for four years from an agreed date

Cluster on Communication

- **Ms Kristine Greenaway** (Canada, The United Church of Canada) be appointed Director for four years from an agreed date.

II CONTRACT EXTENSIONS

All the contract extensions listed below were for three years unless otherwise stated:

Cluster on Issues and Themes: Team on Faith and Order

- **Rev. Dr Thomas Best** (USA, Disciples of Christ) at present Executive Secretary, Faith and Order, Unit I, from 1 January 2000 (will complete 19 years' service)
- **Rev. Dr Dagmar Heller** (FRG, EKD [United]) at present Executive Secretary, Faith and Order, Unit I, for two years from 1 October 1999 (will complete 8 years 6 months' service)

Cluster on Relations and Constituencies: Team on Ecumenical Relations

- **Mr Huibert van Beek** (Netherlands, Swiss Protestant Church Federation) at present Executive Secretary for Church and Ecumenical Relations, General Secretariat, from 1 October 1999 (will complete 24 years 1 month's service)

Team on Regional Relations

- **Ms Marta Palma** (Chile, Pentecostal Mission Church) at present Executive Secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean, Unit IV, from 1 October 1999 (will complete 16 years' service)

Team on International Relations

- **Mr Clement John** (Pakistan, Church of Pakistan) at present Executive Secretary, CCIA, Unit III, from 1 February 2000 (will complete 10 years' service)

Cluster on Communication: Team on Publications and Documentation

- **Mr Marlin VanElderen** (USA, Christian Reformed Church in North America) at present Executive Editor, Publications, and Acting Director, Communication Department, from 1 October 1999 (will complete 20 years' service)

Cluster on Finance, Service and Administration

Team on Finance

- **Ms Joan Geuss** (USA, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) at present Controller Finance, from 1 February 2000 (will complete 10 years' service)
- **Mr Costandi Mustaklem** (Jerusalem, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and All Palestine [Eastern]) at present Controller, Finance, from 1 March 2000 (will complete 13 years' service)

Team on Human Resources/Personnel

- **Ms Angelica Espinoza** (Chile, Roman Catholic Church) at present Associate Director, Personnel Office, from 1 January 2000 (will complete 24 years 9 months' service)

III RATIFICATION OF OFFICERS' DECISIONS - June 1998

It was reported that the Officers made the following decisions at their meeting in June 1998:

Appointment/Internal Transfer

Cluster on Relations and Constituencies

Team on Ecumenical Relations

- **Ms Teny Pirri-Simonian** (Lebanon, Armenian Apostolic Church [Oriental]) at present Executive Secretary for Christian Education, Unit II, as Executive Secretary for Church and Ecumenical Relations from 1 January 1999. Her present appointment was extended until 31 December 2001 (Central Committee September 1997) (will complete 15 years' service)

Contract Extension

Cluster on Communication

Team on Public Information

- **Mr Peter Williams** (Denmark, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark) Visual Arts Coordinator, for three years from 1 May 1999 (will complete 19 years' service)

IV. RATIFICATION OF OFFICERS' DECISION BY POSTAL VOTE

Cluster on Communication: Team on Public Information

- **Rev. Bob Scott** (Aotearoa-New Zealand, Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia) at present Executive Secretary, Racial Justice, Unit III, as Cluster Communication Officer from 1 January 1999. His present appointment was extended until 30 September 2001 (Central Committee September 1997) (will complete 13 years' service)
- **Ms Sara Speicher** (USA, Church of the Brethren) at present Programme Assistant, Unit III, as Cluster Communication Officer for four years from 1 January 1999 (will complete 6 years' service)

V. VACANCIES

It was reported that the Officers declared the following vacancies at their meeting in June 1998:

Cluster on Issues and Themes - Education and Ecumenical Formation

-- Executive Secretary for Education and Ecumenical Formation

Cluster on Communication - Public Information
-- Media Relations Officer

VI. INFORMATION

1. Appointment of Deputy General Secretary

It was reported that the Central Committee ratified by postal vote the following appointment made by the Executive Committee at its meeting in February 1998:

- **Mr Georges Lemopoulos** (Turkey, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople [Eastern]) at present Executive Secretary for Church and Ecumenical Relations, as Deputy General Secretary for five years from 1 January 1999.

2. Departures

It was reported that the following staff members had left, or would shortly leave, the service of the World Council of Churches on the dates indicated:

Unit I

- **Dr John Pobee** (Ghana, Church of the Province of West Africa [Anglican]) Executive Secretary, on 31 December 1998 (will complete 15 years' service)

Unit III

- **Mr Israel Batista-Guerra** (Cuba, Methodist Church in Cuba) Executive Secretary for Networks' Coordination, on 31 December 1998 (will complete 12 years' service)

General Secretariat

- **Ms Mary Ann Lundy** (USA, Presbyterian Church [USA]) Deputy General Secretary, on 31 January 1999 (will complete 4 years' service)

General Secretariat - Assembly Office

- **Ms Pauline McKay** (Aotearoa-New Zealand, the Methodist Church of New Zealand) Executive Secretary, on 31 October 1998 (will complete 3 years' service)

Cluster on Communication - Public Information

- **Rev. John Newbury** (UK, Methodist Church) Media Relations Officer, on 31 March 1999 (will complete 5 years 9 months' service)

3. Consultants

a) It was reported that the following consultants were appointed by the General Secretary since the last Executive Committee meeting in February 1998:

Cluster on Issues and Themes: Team on Education and Ecumenical Formation

- **Dr Judo Poerwowidagdo** (Indonesia, Javanese Christian Churches in Central Java) as Consultant for Asia-Pacific Region for Ecumenical Theological Education for one year from 1 January 1999 (will complete 9 years 4 months' service)

Unit II

- **Dr Sara Bhattacharji** (India, Church of South India) as Consultant on Health and Healing, for five and a half months from 15 August 1998 (will complete 5 1/2 months' service)

Unit III

- **Ms Anna Aakerlund** (Sweden, Church of Sweden) Decade Festival Consultant, for 2 months from 1 January 1999 (will complete 1 year 6 months' service)
- **Ms Maria Koutatzi** (Greece, Roman Catholic Church) as Consultant, Youth Team, for 1 year from 1 April 1998 (will complete 1 year's service)
- **Ms Pauline McKay** (Aotearoa-New Zealand, the Methodist Church of New Zealand) as Decade Festival Consultant for 4 months from 1 November 1998 (will complete 3 years 4 months' service)

Unit IV

- **Ms Margarita Banda** (Argentina, Evangelical Methodist Church in Uruguay) at present Executive Secretary, ECLOF, as Consultant for 2 months from 1 November 1998 (will complete 6 years 2 months' service)

ACT

- **Mr Dirk van Gorp** (USA, United Methodist Church) (up to 31 May 1998 seconded by United Methodist Church) as Consultant - ACT Appeals Officer, for 1 year 7 months from 1 June 1998 (will complete 2 years 7 months' service)

ECLOF

- **Dr Priscilla Daniel** (India, Church of South India) as Consultant for 1 year from 1 June 1998 (will complete 1 year's service)

b) It was reported that the following consultants would leave the service of the World Council of Churches on the dates indicated:

Unit III

- **Ms Anna Aakerlund** (Sweden, Church of Sweden) Decade Festival Consultant, on 28 February 1999 (will complete 1 year 6 months' service)

- **Ms Pauline McKay** (Aotearoa-New Zealand, the Methodist Church of New Zealand) Decade Festival Consultant, on 28 February 1999 (will complete 3 years 4 months' service)

Unit IV

- **Ms Margarita Banda** (Argentina, Evangelical Methodist Church in Uruguay) Consultant, on 31 December 1998 (will complete 6 years 2 months' service)

B. Eighth Assembly - Observers

1. A list of churches and organisations which had applied for **observer status** since the meeting of the Officers in June 1998 was considered by the Sub-committee on Staffing and Nominations, which recommended that they be accepted (if space permitted). Dr Raiser explained that some churches had not included their ecumenical officer in their delegations on the assumption that he/she might be included in another category of participant. By observing other balances, this allowed for a wider choice of delegates. The Executive Committee **agreed** to the following:

- Association of Missionary Societies, Ireland
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (Ecumenical Officer plus two others)
- Eukumindo
- Church of Sweden (Ecumenical Officer plus one person)
- CIDSE-CAFOD (Roman Catholic development cooperation)
- Pax Romana (Roman Catholic, Geneva)
- Antilles Episcopal Conference (Roman Catholic)
- Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (Moderator elect)
- Mennonite Central Committee
- Mennonite Church and Peace
- Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand (Moderator elect)
- African Church of the Holy Spirit (Representative of Chef Spirituel)
- Presbyterian Church of Korea (general secretary plus two others)
- Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Ecumenical Officer)
- Jeunesse étudiante catholique, Côte d'Ivoire (Roman Catholic Student Youth)
- Christian Council of Sweden
- Semanario Evangélico de Puerto Rico
- Fraternidad Teológico Latinoamericana
- Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe
- Association of Interchurch Families, UK
- Irish School of Ecumenics

- Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania - AidRom
- International Association of Religious Freedom
- School of Ecclesiastical Sciences, South Africa
- Amity Foundation, China
- United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, UK
- Iglesia Cristiana Discipulos de Cristo, Puerto Rico
- Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches
- Methodist Church, Brazil (Ecumenical Officer)
- Church of Norway (Ecumenical Officer)
- International Fellowship of Evangelical Mission Theologians (already approved, but had indicated its wish to send six persons representing different regions)
- International Council of Christians and Jews

C. Eighth Assembly - Elections

The Sub-committee recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**

- that the Presidents for the next period be elected at the Central Committee meeting in August 1999;
- that provision be made for the appointment of the WCC representatives to the Joint Working Group, the members of the Faith and Order Standing Commission, and the core group of the Bossey Board at the first meeting of the newly elected Central Committee in Harare.

Dr Raiser indicated that the Sub-committee had received a list of names proposed for membership of the Faith and Order Standing Commission, and had raised some questions to be followed up with Faith and Order. The list would be brought back to the Executive in December, and the Commission would be appointed by Central Committee in Harare.

All other commissions and the Bossey Board would be appointed at the first full meeting of Central Committee in August 1999.

Bishop Anderson expressed concern that the Presidents would only be elected in August 1999 which he felt was a long time to be without them. The general secretary responded that the intention of this decision had been to separate the election of presidents from the politicking atmosphere of the assembly; he felt that it was important to provide sufficient time to find the appropriate persons and to avoid the pressure of lobbying.

At a later session, Dr Tolen took up this discussion again. In view of the decision by Central Committee that presidents would no longer be elected by the assembly but by the Central Committee, he wanted to know what had really led to this action. The second

thing that disturbed him was the fact that presidents would no longer have the right to vote. Had the current presidents done something wrong which had caused concern? Had they made some serious mistakes? What was behind this decision? He did not expect an immediate response but wanted to share this feeling with the Executive.

Dr Kässmann asserted that the decision had nothing to do with the current presidents - it had simply been a way of avoiding the painful situation that had occurred over the election process in Canberra.

The general secretary stated that on the contrary, he and his colleagues felt a deep sense of gratitude to the outgoing presidents for the way they had succeeded in giving a new and significant profile to this office. He had called upon the presidents frequently and had always appreciated being able to rely on their assistance in all sorts of matters; they had provided advice when requested, and attended numerous meetings and consultations on behalf of the Council. It would be tragic if they thought that such a decision was the consequence of some dissatisfaction with those who had served up to this assembly.

The only feeling of dissatisfaction had to do with the process of election at Canberra - a feeling that was widely shared. During the initial period of the Council's existence, it had been important to have a group of church leaders who could lend their authority to the WCC as a body that still had to gain recognition. Increasingly, presidents had become subject to balances, and there had come a point when it was necessary to define the specific role of a president. The conviction emerged that they serve as recognised ecumenical elders of a given region; that they can help significantly not only in interpreting the WCC but in making linkages within the ecumenical movement in a given region.

Dr Raiser quoted the revised Rule V.4. which stated that "the Presidents should be persons whose ecumenical experience and standing is widely recognised among the WCC's ecumenical partners in their respective regions." (minutes of Executive Committee, February 1998, p.77).

The result was that it had been felt advisable to separate the election of presidents from that of the governing bodies; also, it would be an advantage to have time until the first full meeting of the new Central Committee to seek persons with the recognised standing and to consult with partners - a process that would be difficult to carry out prior to the assembly.

Bishop Okullu nevertheless felt that nine months was too a long a period for the Council to be without its presidents. Others thought there may well be a discussion on this issue at the assembly and it was important to be prepared for it, and to ensure that the matter

was presented clearly. Ms Mendis felt that some delegates may wish to elect their presidents themselves. Yet, having made this decision, we must stand by it.

Bishop Zacharias expressed regret that the current presidents were ending their term of service with painful feelings; he hoped that nevertheless they would accept the assurance of members of the Executive that their presence and participation had been of great value and he trusted they would move on with gratitude to God.

14. FINANCE MATTERS

A. Finance Presentation

Ms Rantakari, moderator of the Finance Sub-committee, invited Mr Robert Christeler to give a presentation on the current financial situation of the World Council.

Mr Christeler referred to the Finance Report 1997 which had been circulated. The results for 1997 were more satisfactory than in the previous year with a surplus of CHF 768,000. Investment income was considerably lower than in the previous year - which had been exceptional - and this was an indication that the Council was moving in the right direction, keeping itself independent as far as possible from investment results in their present volatile state.

With regard to activities, there had been a drop in income of nearly CHF 7 million. This was probably due to a combination of several factors, including the trend of partner agencies to move towards bilateralism.

Seen in the context of the last four years, activity income in 1997 dropped by CHF 17 million in one year, but remained relatively stable between 1994 and 1997 when there was a drop of 15 million in four years. But there was cause for optimism in 1998 with a probable reversal of the trend to be expected. Expenditure on programmatic grants had dropped by CHF 17.5 million in the same period.

1997 showed an improvement in membership contributions, with undesignated income up to CHF 6.6 million (6.3 million in 1994). Designated operating contribu-tions were also up by one million since 1994 to CHF 21 million in 1997. However, agencies were tending to decrease their financial commitment to the Council - which showed the need to be cautious in planning future activities: the budget for 1998 was CHF 18 million but was reduced to CHF 16 million for 1999.

Efforts were continuing to monitor income received through membership fees from

churches; a little over half the member churches pay their fees, but some had valid reasons for not contributing. Recalling the decision that churches not making a minimum payment would not be eligible for a travel subsidy for the assembly, Ms Stromberg said the subsidy group was taking these guidelines into account; some churches had begun to consider making a contribution, and a number had offered to subsidise others.

For 1998 - at end of July - there was an operating surplus of CHF 3,983 million; pledged income was only a little below budget, while pledged activity income was CHF 11.8 million below budget. However, previous experience showed that a considerable amount of the Council's income was usually received towards the end of the year, so the situation would probably improve in the next few months.

With regard to the 1999 budget, efforts had been made to involve team coordinators in their own budgeting so that they felt some ownership both of their budget and for actual performance. An early draft budget had shown a deficit of CHF 350,000 but staff were committed to re-work it to achieve a balanced operating budget. In light of the change in structure, some items had been reclassified as activities rather than as part of the operating budget, and would therefore only be implemented if the related income became available.

The salary level in 1999 would be lower by CHF 2.8 million. It had been agreed to grant a 2% increase in salaries which had been frozen since 1995.

B. Report of the Finance Sub-committee

The Moderator invited Ms Rantakari to present the Sub-committee's report. She noted that, in view of the earlier presentation on financial matters, this report dealt mainly with recommendations for action.

1) Financial Report 1997
The Finance Sub-committee recommended

> *that the accounts for the year 1997, as presented in the Financial Report, be approved by the Executive Committee.*

Mr Briggs referred to Mr Christeler's presentation, and his explanation as to why activity funds had reduced to the extent that they have. Mr Briggs urged that, in presenting financial matters to the assembly, a similar explanation be given. There were good reasons for the present trend, and the assembly should be made aware that many of the funding partners had had their own income cut by a larger amount than they had reduced

their giving to the Council. Their confidence in the Council remained but their capacity to support it in financial terms had decreased.

Ms Rantakari affirmed that plans were in hand to include such an analysis during the first finance presentation to the assembly. Mr Christeler added that in his view there was still room for improvement, both in terms of the way the Council presented itself, and in improving its credibility in terms of managing the resources entrusted to it.

The Executive Committee **approved** the accounts for the year 1997 as set out in the Financial Report.

2) Budget for the Year 1999

The Finance Sub-committee discussed the provisional budget as presented during the plenary session (Appendix VI) and recommended

> *that a final balanced operational budget be submitted to the Executive Committee at its meeting in December, preceding the Assembly.*

The Executive Committee **agreed**.

3) Assembly Budget

The Finance Sub-committee heard a report by Ms Stromberg concerning the Assembly budget and the results to date. It was noted that the latest financial forecast showed a surplus and a contingency equivalent to approximately 1.44 % of total expenditure.

The Executive Committee noted this with satisfaction.

4) Global Custody

The Finance Sub-committee heard the explanations by Mr Christeler regarding the benefits and anticipated costs of the proposal made by the Investment Advisory Group (IAG), during its recent meeting, to use Global Custody services provided by a reputable Geneva financial institution.

The Sub-committee noted that the proposal, if accepted by the Executive Committee, would entail no change in the control by the WCC over its investment portfolio, but would provide a considerable simplification of investment accounting and reporting procedures. It would also provide a reliable basis for comparing investment performance among assets managers, over time. It was also noted that Global Custody Services were successfully used by organisations represented on the Council's IAG, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The Finance Sub-committee proposed that the Executive Committee agree to the recommendation by the IAG

that the proposed move to Global Custody for the General and Endowment Fund portfolios be formally approved and effected as soon as possible

Asked to explain this procedure, Mr Christeler said that the Council used different banks to manage its investments and each had its own way of presenting the results of their activity - average holdings, return, yield, etc. It required considerable staff work to make these different presentations comparable to each other. In responding to this need for comparisons, the system of Global Custody had been created, which would mean placing our shares and investments into custody. Our assets managers would continue to manage the Council's portfolios as in the past, except that the shares would be placed in the custody of the global custodian which has the ability to present consolidated reports in a single format, thus facilititating the task of interpreting those results and presenting them to the FSC and to the Executive. In addition, the global custodian would do the investment accounting - the equivalent of a quarter of a WCC staff position. The use of Global Custody was being recommended by a member of the IAG who had considerable experience with the system.

The Executive Commitee **agreed** to this recommendation.

5) Banque Edouard Constant

The Sub-committee heard the explanation of Mr Christeler concerning the dis-appointing performance of one of its assets managers, the Banque Edouard Constant (BEC). The IAG felt that, while the Council needed to send a clear signal of dissatisfaction to BEC regarding the performance of the portfolio under its management, it was premature to terminate the Bank's mandate in view of the recent appointment of a new Chief Investment Officer.

The Finance Sub-committee proposed that the Executive Committee follow the recommendation by the IAG:

a) to consider reducing the level of commitment to Banque Edouard Constant;

b) to give Mr Girardin, BEC's recently appointed Chief Investment Officer, a mandate on the remaining portfolio for a full investment cycle (2-3 years), with the LPP Index as benchmark;

c) that this mandate would be monitored through quarterly meetings with the bank and would be subject to satisfactory results and continuity in BEC's management structure.

In relation to the above, the Sub-committee further proposed that the Executive Committee follow the recommendation by the IAG:

> *that a mandate be given to staff to review the objectives and benchmarks for the General Fund in the light of the World Council of Churches' present investment needs with a view to consolidation of the General Fund portfolios into a single portfolio (...)*

Placing this state of affairs in context, Mr Christeler explained that the BEC was used not only by the WCC but by the Pension Fund, and by the LWF. It appeared that all three bodies had been affected by the internal change of ownership of the BEC (formerly Banque Scandinave). Some members of the IAG visited the bank together with staff and analysed the situation on the Council's behalf. As a result, the IAG recommended that the Council indicate its dissatisfaction by reducing its investments with the BEC, but for the remaining investments to give a mandate of two-three years, monitoring performance by means of quarterly meetings. A similar recommendation would be made to the Pension Fund Board.

In response to a question, Mr Christeler affirmed that the Council could change its investment arrangements with BEC at any time during this period. It was his belief that the risk in keeping some investments with BEC was not greater than if it was decided to leave the bank entirely.

Dr Raiser asked what the response would be if the question were raised in the Assembly Finance Committee as to whether 10% of the Council's funds had in fact been invested with the Ecumenical Development Cooperative Society (EDCS). Mr Christeler affirmed that this would be the case by the time of the assembly.

6) Appointment of the IAG, the Pension Fund Board and the Audit Committee

The Sub-committee recommended *that the Investment Advisory Group, the Pension Fund Board and the Audit Committee remain in function until the first meeting of the Central Committee in August 1999.*

The Executive Committee **agreed**.

7) Reappointment of KPMG as Auditors for the 1998 Accounts

The Finance Sub-committee heard a report from Mr Briggs, Moderator of the Audit Committee and recommended *that the Executive Committee reappoint KPMG as Auditors for the 1998 Accounts.*

The Executive Committee **agreed**.

Mr Briggs had also proposed that, for the 1999 period audit, a review process be entered into whereby competitive bids by two or three Audit firms, including KPMG, could be evaluated. He further raised the question whether there was a requirement that the Council's accounts be audited by an international firm, or whether a local firm would be acceptable. This should be clarified with the Council's partners prior to any decision being taken.

Mr Briggs elaborated on his remarks, pointing out that there were certain statutory requirements for audits, but stressing the need for clarity about the kind of audit required by the Council and whether it was necessary to use one of the international bodies. LWF did not do so. He therefore urged that some of the major donors be asked for their opinion on this matter, and whether they felt a high quality firm in Geneva would be adequate.

8) Income Development

After hearing presentations by Ms Blyth, Mr Kobia and Mr Christeler regarding new orientations for the Office of Income Coordination and Development (OICD), the Finance Sub-committee encouraged the pursuit of initiatives towards integrated fund raising efforts by OICD and Activity Cluster leadership.

Dr Raiser asked whether future arrangements in the USA had been included in this review. He informed the Executive of the intention to phase out the current arrangement with EDI - the Ecumenical Development Initiative, a joint venture between the WCC and the NCCCUSA. The EDI evaluation had led to an assessment on the part of both bodies that the EDI should not be continued beyond the end of 1998. However, it was clear that the WCC would need to have a means for income development in the US, but this should not be in competition with the NCC. Negotiations with the NCC were currently under way to enter into an experimental period of two years during which the WCC would maintain a limited instrument that would be integrated into the US Office and related to the Finance Cluster in Geneva. A coordinating group would be set up with the NCC to plan and monitor eventual activities.

The advice of the Board of Directors of the US Office, the Council's member churches in the US, and member churches of the NCC, was being sought to help find a way of avoiding potential conflicts of interest between the two bodies in terms of income development in the USA.

9) Funds and Reserves consolidation

The Finance Sub-committee heard a report concerning the need for consolidation of an excessively large number of funds and reserves maintained in the Council's accounts. It encouraged this initiative and undertook to discuss a final proposal to be presented at the meeting of the Executive Committee preceding the Assembly.

10) Ecumenical Institute building renovation

The Sub-committee heard a report by Ms Lundy regarding the status of this renovation project and proposed that a feasibility study be undertaken with the assistance of outside expertise, as required.

Dr Raiser said that certain installations had to be replaced as a matter of urgency, and the Board felt that, while this work was being done, the further renovation process should also be carried out in order to bring the standard of Bossey to a level that would be more attractive to customers, thus increasing the occupancy rate. Proposals had been tendered by two architects of which the Board had selected one. The aim of the feasibility study was to calculate the financial implications and consider possibilities for funding such a project. An update on the situation would be shared with the Executive in December. Secondly, in view of the reduction in the special contribution to Bossey from EKD which had been used to cover a teaching staff position, negotiations were underway to find other sources for this and other costs.

One of the difficulties being faced in fund-raising was that no provision for capitalisation of the funds needed for any future renovation - either of Bossey or of the Ecumenical Centre - had been made by our predecessors. However, Ms Lundy assured the Executive that new possibilities for funding were emerging and she urged members to communicate the fact that there was new impetus for expansion of Bossey's programme which should be encouraged.

The Executive Committee noted this situation.

11) Ecumenical Centre renovation

The Sub-committee heard a report by Mr Christeler regarding the status of this renovation project, and noted that a vote regarding a subsidy by the Canton of Geneva was pending before the Cantonal Legislative Chamber in October or November 1998. Final decisions as to the scope, timing and budget of the renovation project would be made once that vote had taken place.

The Finance Sub-committee report was **received** with appreciation.

* * *

Note: Bishop Nifon had raised a question about "ecumenical discipline" in relation to fund-raising and the need to avoid "confessionalism" in this matter. In the ensuing discussion, Ms Blyth pointed out that this was in her view a programmatic or relational issue rather than a finance-related one. Studies were underway in terms of where the discipline was in relation to sharing among partners.

15. MODERATOR'S AND GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORTS TO THE EIGHTH ASSEMBLY

A. Moderator's Report

The Moderator indicated that his report to the Harare Assembly would be in two parts - the first dealing with significant aspects related to the work of the World Council since the Canberra Assembly, and the second taking up three major issues: 1) the Jubilee of the WCC; 2) the Jubilee of the Declaration on Human Rights; 3) the Assembly theme. He would conclude by establishing some linkage between the first Assembly in Amsterdam in 1948 and Harare. 1998.

B. General Secretary's Report

The General Secretary said he would begin with this linkage between Amsterdam and Harare, referring to the 50th Anniversary of the WCC and the way the Council and the ecumenical movement had travelled since 1948, now finding themselves at a crossroads. Taking up the assembly theme, he would build on the jubilee motif, entering the movement of the pilgrim people, following Christ. Leading into the open again, he would look at the metaphor of 'ecumenical space', something which had begun to surface in a number of areas, linking this with the interpretation of what CUV means by 'fellowship', mutual accountability, and interpret it in the light of 'ecumenical space'. This would lead to reflection on the ecumenical vision: being at a crossroads the way ahead was not clear, so the assembly should be challenged to articulate afresh the ecumenical vision for the 21st century, a vision that would have to be implemented by a younger generation.

16. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Provisional dates for meetings in 1999 were proposed as follows, to be confirmed by the new governing bodies in Harare.

16 - 19 March (arrival 15, departure 20 March)	Executive Committee	Bossey, nr Geneva
24 - 25 August (arrival 23 August)	Executive Committee	Geneva
26 August - 3 September (arrival 25 Aug, departure 4 Sept)	Central Committee	Geneva

17. CLOSING ACTIONS

The Moderator expressed particular thanks to the General Secretary, especially in view of the difficulties experienced during the past six months. He also thanked all the staff for their support and help in various ways throughout the meeting.

Thanks were expressed to Rev. Ineke Bakker and her colleagues on the staff of the Netherlands Council of Churches, especially in relation to the logistics for this meeting. The Moderator concluded by expressing personal thanks to all members of the Executive Committee for their active participation in the deliberations and decisions of this meeting. The final meeting of this Committee would take place in Harare on 1-2 December.

Bishop Anderson expressed appreciation on behalf of the Executive to the moderator for his even-handedness in dealing with all the issues faced during the meeting. Ms Santana thanked the vice-moderators and staff for their solidarity.

The **Closing Prayer** was led by Bishop Anderson.

This session of the Executive Committee was adjourned at 17.40 on 18 September 1998.

* * * * *

On Saturday 19 September 1998, members of the Executive Committee and staff were invited to attend a Symposium at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam entitled *Faith in the City: Fifty Years World Council of Churches in a Secularized Western Context: Amsterdam 1948-1998*. This ecumenical conference was convened jointly by the Council of Churches in the Netherlands, the Amsterdam Council of Churches, and the Faculty of Theology of the Vrije Universiteit, the Interuniversity Institute for Missiological and Ecumenical Research (IIMO) in Utrecht, as part of the Dutch response to the request by the WCC to prepare for its Eighth Assembly in Harare in former assembly locations.

Speakers at the Symposium included Anton Houtepen, Margot Kässmann, Konrad Raiser and Anton Wessels; the moderator was Ineke Bakker. A publication *Faith in the City* edited by Martien Brinkman contains the texts of the speeches.

The programme also included an invitation to attend one of a number of workshops on location, followed by a time of fellowship at the Mennonite Church. The day concluded with an ecumenical service of worship celebrating the 50th anniversary of the WCC at the Old Lutheran Church, Amsterdam, attended by Her Majesty Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands.

APPENDIX I

ATTENDANCE

Presidents:	Bishop Vinton Anderson	
	Ms Priyanka Mendis	
	Rev. Eunice Santana	
	Dr Aaron Tolen	
Officers:	H.H. Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia	(Moderator)
	Ephorus Dr Soritua Nababan	(Vice-Moderator)
	Pastora Nélida Ritchie	(Vice-Moderator)
	Rev. Dr Konrad Raiser	(General Secretary)
Members:	Dr Marion Best	
	Mr John Briggs	
	Ms Virginia Gcabashe	
	Rt Rev. Drexel Gomez	
	Rev. Dr Margot Kässmann	
	Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky	
	Ms Maryssa Mapanao-Camaddo	
	Ms Beatrice Odonkor	
	Rt Rev. Dr J. Henry Okullu	
	Ms Birgitta Rantakari	
	Gr. Prot. Dr Georges Tsetsis	
	Rt Rev. Dr Zacharias Mar Theophilus	
Apologies:	Prof. Dr Anna-Marie Aagaard	
	Bishop Leslie Boseto	
	H.H. Pope Shenouda	
	Metropolitan Daniel of Moldavia and Bukovina	
	Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk	
	Rev. Valamotu Palu	
	Bishop Melvin G. Talbert	
Substitutes:	Hiermonk Hilarion Alfeyev	
	H.G. Bishop Nifon of Slobozia and Calarasi	

Visitors:	Ms Vivienne Anderson Mr Jack Best Rev. Hagop Demirdjian Dr Kyriaki FitzGerald Ms Carrol Gomez Ms Alexandria Kishkovsky
Staff:	Ms Jeanne Becher Rev. Myra Blyth Mr Robert Christeler Rev. Dwain Epps Rev. Dr Thomas FitzGerald Ms Aruna Gnanadason (part-time) Mr Melaku Kifle Rev. Samuel Kobia Mr Jan Kok (part-time) Rev. Ana Langerak Mr Georges Lemopoulos Ms Mary Ann Lundy Rev. John Newbury (part-time) Rev. Carlos Sintado Ms Jean Stromberg Mr Hubert van Beek Mr Marlin VanElderen
Minute-writer:	Ms Rosemary Green
Administration:	Ms Ursula Zierl

APPENDIX II

MEMBERSHIP OF SUB-COMMITTEES

Sub-committee on Staffing and Nominations

	Ephorus Dr Soritua Nababan	Moderator
	Ms Marion Best	
*	Mr John Briggs	
	Ms Virginia Gcabashe	
	Bishop Drexel Gomez	
	Metr. Kirill of Smolensk	(absent)
	Rev. Valamotu Palu	(absent)
	- Fr Hilarion Alfeyev	

Sub-committee on Finance

	Ms Birgitta Rantakari	Moderator
	Prof. Anne-Marie Aagaard	(absent)
*	Bishop Vinton Anderson	
	Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky	
	Ms Maryssa Mapanao-Camaddo	
	Bishop Henry Okullu	
*	Rev. Eunice Santana	
	Bishop Melvin Talbert	(absent)
*	- Bishop Nifon of Slobozia and Calarasi	

Sub-committee on Programme

	Rev. Nélida Ritchie	Moderator
	Bishop Leslie Boseto	(absent)
	Metr. Daniel of Moldavia & Bukovina	(absent)
*	Dr Margot Kässmann	
	Ms Priyanka Mendis	
	Ms Beatrice Odonkor	
	H.H. Pope Shenouda	(absent)
*	Dr Aaron Tolen	
	Dr Georges Tsetsis	
	Bishop Zacharias Mar Theophilos	

* Also members of Public Issues Sub-committee at this meeting.

APPENDIX III

EVALUATION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BY MEMBERS

Ten persons filled out the forms. The following is a compilation of their reflections.

PART I requested personal reflections.

1. What are the events that stand out in your mind as especially significant for the life of the WCC and the ecumenical movement during this past period?

Those mentioned most often were: the CUV process; the Ecumenical Decade; the internal re-organization; the election process for the general secretary; dealing with the financial cutbacks; relations of Orthodox churches with the Council; the loss of meaning of ecumenism in churches and the world. Programmes mentioned were: the launching of the Programme to Overcome Violence; HIV-AIDS; Gospel and Culture; changes in Africa and WCC's contributions; Racism in the US. Events named were the 50th Anniversary Celebration of Bossey, the Central Committee meeting in Johannesburg, meetings in South Africa and Romania.

2. What are the experiences that you remember... as having been most enjoyable?

Mentioned most often was the community that developed within the Executive Committee and the friendships formed with committee members and staff, especially experienced in the informal times; the meetings in various parts of the world; regional meetings; worship; visits to member churches and interaction with local situations.

3. What ...was your major personal contribution to the WCC and what could have assisted you in contributing more effectively?

Personal contributions cited were ecumenical memory and knowledge; work on change of parts of WCC while keeping the whole in mind; interpreting of WCC's nature and mission to media; moderating; relating local to global; active participation in discussions; regular attendance at meetings and bringing regional concerns to the table.

Those things that could have made contributions more effective were: a first year tutorial or briefing on unfamiliar issues and procedures; openness on the part of leaders to hear all concerns; clarification of the role of the presidents; a receptive attitude in hearing those members from smaller churches; a better process for coming to a common opinion

on sensitive issues; a process for attending to detail without stifling innovation; consistency of attendance by members, and the need for young adults to be included.

PART II was an evaluation of the Executive Committee: *1. Its relation to and interaction with the Central Committee; 2. The structure of the Executive Committee into sub-committees, how was it helpful and how not? 3. How could it be more effective?*

Most felt that the relation of Executive Committee and Central Committee was largely positive with the development of a relationship of trust for the most part. Most often cited as problems were: the repeating of discussion in the Central Committee even after decisions had been made in the Executive Committee; a lack of clarity on the part of members about the difference in function of the two bodies; and the increased work load in the Executive Committee. Also needed, it is felt, is a better reporting mechanism from the Executive Committee to the Central Committee with the suggestion that a summary of actions be sent immediately after the meeting to Central Committee. There was also concern for clarity on the role of the Officers in the decision-making processes.

Regarding the sub-committee structure, responders felt that it was helpful in giving opportunity for more thorough and more frank discussion of issues and concerns thus leading to a clarification of issues; it offered a way to press further on issues, and gave the opportunity for staff briefings on issues. The structure was not helpful in too often being a repeat of the plenary discussion; too many staff present, particularly in the Programme Sub-committee, and often the outcome was pre-judged because of the prior plenary meeting.

Several ways to ameliorate the above problems were suggested: a sharing time at the beginning of a meeting; an orientation session to clarify functions, tasks, and processes; posting comments on newsprint so members do not repeat points already made; having staff present only for the part that they are to speak to; distinguishing at the beginning of the meeting between what needs to be discussed in plenary and what can be dealt with in sub-committees to avoid repetition; giving clarity when papers are sent out for the meeting as to which will need action and which are for information, and encouraging members to write out and bring questions to be posted before the discussion starts.

The answer to what was missing in the way meetings were structured was most often, "Breaks!"with the suggestion that the schedule be varied from day to day, with, for example, a longer lunch break on one day and a session in the evening, a free afternoon another day, etc. Stress relieving exercise was another suggestion. The need for time for interpersonal relationships was named by almost every respondent, and one held that there was a need for more structured social interaction to avoid some going together in small groups, thus leaving others out. Also cited was the need for more flexibility in the

agenda with the suggestion that a process for building the agenda by the committee be considered so that the group could own it, change it and not experience hidden agendas. The setting of the agenda could be based on a review of the last Central Committee meeting, on reports from the moderator and general secretary and the directors of the Clusters. A priority process could be developed naming the most important things that need decisions immediately. Time would need to be given for a real hammering out of decisions and the voicing of differing opinions. It was also thought that we should always build in time for experiencing local churches even when meeting often in Switzerland.

The THIRD PART of the questionnaire asked for reflections on the future Executive Committee, what skills would be needed in future members and how could they best be utilized.

It was suggested that we need to review the changes in the tasks and functions of the Central Committee and the Executive Committee so that the CC will take its role of deliberating and setting priorities which are then translated into programmes recommended by the Programme Committee to the Executive Committee, which will then decide which of these the resources will support. These different functions require new abilities on the part of Executive Committee members.

Criteria listed were the following: that they hold leadership positions in their churches; display ecumenical commitment at every level; have the ability to read vast quantities of papers and analyze them; have a knowledge of ecumenical realities past and present; broad experience in the ecumenical movement, thus enabling them to see the "big picture"; be culturally sensitive; have the capacity to listen and to dialogue and communicate well, and be receptive to the views of others. Also listed was the ability to have the courage of their convictions so as not to be "rubber stamps". Special requirements of leaders included the capacity to elaborate consensus proposals, to use time effectively, and know and respect the constitutional rules and procedures.

It was stated over and over again that prospective members must be made aware of the large amount of time and energy required to be on the Executive Committee, and that no one should accept the responsibility who is not prepared to make it a priority in his or her life, and to attend every meeting as a minimal requirement.

Given repeatedly in answer to how skills could best be utilized, was the view that Executive Committee members should be consulted before being placed in sub-committees or appointed to tasks. It was also suggested that a catalogue of skills of Central Committee members be kept so that members could be called on to perform tasks for which they were best suited.

It was felt by several that Executive Committee members should be expected to assume responsibility for interpreting WCC actions to the regions and locally and should be able to give accountability for this. It was further suggested that the search for those with potential for Executive Committee should be carried on outside the usual churches so that new talent could be discovered and responsibilities shared more widely on the Central Committee. It was suggested that a process of evaluation be used at regular intervals in order to determine and make needed changes in the way the committee works.

APPENDIX III

ORTHODOX PARTICIPATION IN THE WCC
The Current Situation: Issues and Ways Forward

Orthodox Task Force, September 1998

This paper is a response to a request from the Staff Executive Group. As such it is the second of a series – the first having been received by the Executive Committee in February 1998. Its intention is to help interpret events and issues, as well as offer an invitation to further the dialogue, concerning the relationship between the Orthodox churches and the WCC. Both the attempt to understand the complexities of the relationship and the dialogue need to take place among the WCC staff, its governing bodies, ad hoc consultative groups, and the churches themselves. The Task Force seeks in this paper to reflect what our churches are telling us through their actions and words, as well as to present these issues in their broader context, both in the world and in the wider membership of the WCC. The final section of this paper features concrete suggestions for furthering the dialogue.

I. Introduction: the current crisis

In April of 1998 an inter-Orthodox meeting was convened in Thessaloniki, Greece, by the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This meeting of Eastern Orthodox churches came as a response to the request of the Russian and Serbian Orthodox Churches, and to the withdrawal of the Georgian Orthodox Church from the membership of the WCC. The report of this meeting reflects broad support for dialogue and inter-Christian activity, seeing this as a part of the Church's mission. At the same time, it expresses serious concern over the way in which the ecumenical task is being addressed by the WCC. The Orthodox delegates at Thessaloniki recommend that while all Orthodox churches should send delegations to the WCC's Eighth Assembly, their participation should be strictly limited in order to demonstrate the measure of their concern. The report con cludes by underlining that "these mandates will be maintained until a radical restruc turing of the WCC is accomplished to allow adequate Orthodox participation", and suggesting the creation of a Mixed Theological Commission in order to discuss the forms that such a restructuring might take.

Both the affirmations and the concerns coming out of Thessaloniki can be heard in the reports of several other inter-Orthodox meetings of 1998. The Orthodox Pre-Assembly meeting, organized by the Orthodox Task Force in Damascus, May 1998, while affirming the calling of ecumenism as a "Gospel imperative", also saw "the need for change which would enable a more effective presence and witness, together with a more constructive and engaged participation from the Orthodox". The report made reference to several models for restructuring currently being discussed, and recommended these to the Mixed Theological Commission for their reflection. It also sought to explain Orthodox discomforts with the WCC agenda as well as difficulties in participating in ecumenical worship services. The Pre-Assembly meeting is significant in that, unlike the Thessaloniki meeting, it consisted in delegates from both Eastern and Oriental Orthodox churches. It thus became apparent that the Oriental churches share the same concerns as the Eastern churches, even if they have not as yet gathered to express them as sharply as have the Eastern churches.

Statements from other Orthodox meetings of recent months, in Romania and in the USA, continue along the same lines, affirming the commitment to ecumenism and citing a crisis and the need for change in the WCC.[1] These most recent expressions of alarm do not come from nowhere; they must be seen against the background of recent events, both sociopolitical and within the life of the churches, as well as in the light of concerns expressed repeatedly (and increasingly) by the Orthodox about the life of the WCC in the past few years, if not decades. Indeed, it was precisely as a response to such events and misgivings about the Council that the Central Committee of the WCC (September 1997) requested *"that the Executive Committee design and implement a procedure for conducting a dialogue on the Orthodox churches' participation in and contribution to the life of the WCC"*, and the papers offered by the Orthodox Task Force are to be seen as a contribution to that dialogue.

The seriousness of the crisis in Orthodox-WCC relations is apparent not only in the reports mentioned above, but more acutely in the 1997 withdrawal from the WCC of the Church of Georgia, together with the recent announcement of the impending withdrawal of the Church of Bulgaria. Voices within many Orthodox churches, in particular lately those of Serbia and Russia, call for immediate withdrawal from the Council, and the Church of Jerusalem, although participating in local ecumenism, has for years abstained from sending delegates to WCC meetings. In addition, several leading ecumenists from Orthodox churches are showing their increased dis-satisfaction with the state of the Council by quietly diminishing or curtailing their personal participation in its life. Taken

---

[1]A useful collection of these reports can be found in *Turn to God - Rejoice in Hope: Orthodox Reflections on the Way to Harare* (Geneva: WCC/OTF, 1998)

as a whole, the above describes a serious situation where the very fellowship of the WCC is at stake.

The Thessaloniki meeting sounded a particularly resonant alarm, one which resonated with signals from other churches and gatherings from both Eastern and Oriental families. This alarm received an immediate response on the part of the Moderator of the Central Committee, Catholicos Aram I. His Holiness Aram moved to set into motion without delay the Mixed Theological Commission recommended by Thessaloniki. The Eastern Orthodox churches responded with a request for more time, in order better to secure and articulate inter-Orthodox consensus on the best ways forward.

II. An ecumenical problem

The present situation, most often described as an "Orthodox problem" or an "Orthodox crisis", demands a more careful analysis and a more objective characterization. There is no doubt that there are a number of difficulties particular to the Orthodox churches. Surely some of the recent historical, pastoral, theological and missiological developments in the lives and witness of local Orthodox churches play a significant role in the present state of Orthodox participation in the ecumenical movement and Orthodox relations with the WCC.

However, whatever the origins of the attitude which the Orthodox have come to adopt, there is not a single concern emanating from Orthodox quarters that is uniquely Orthodox. All the questions being raised by the Orthodox churches can be seen to resonate with analogous dissatisfactions in non-Orthodox churches. (Furthermore, the chief concerns being raised pertain to the WCC in its relationship to *all* its member churches.) Indications of the cross-denominational character of the crisis include:

a) a continuing disengagement in the real agenda of the WCC on the part of many member churches – this is testified, e.g., by the responses to the CUV process, which are widely inconsistent both qualitatively and quantitatively across the entire denominational spectrum of the churches;

b) the perceived need for "radical restructuring" felt recently by several regional ecumenical organizations (e.g., Council of Churches in Britain and Ireland, Canadian Council of Churches), in order better to serve and represent a wider range of churches;

c) the difficulties of other churches, perhaps most notably the Roman Catholic Church, with the "ecclesiological challenge" posed by the WCC;

d) the difficulty experienced by many churches, including perhaps especially African churches, in endorsing a WCC discussion on issues of human sexuality;

e) new developments, both positive and negative, in the Evangelical world, as seen e.g. in the non participation in the WCC of the Baptists in Russia.

The issues arising out of the Orthodox world therefore find reflection in the concerns of other churches and councils. Still, while this paper, emerging as it does from the Orthodox Task Force, will continue to express itself in terms of Orthodox concerns, it is clear that the current crisis is not only an Orthodox problem but *an ecumenical problem.*

III. Root causes

(i) *Orthodox understanding and practice of ecumenism.* In 1981, the Sofia Consultation offered the following reminder:

> It should be recognized that from the very beginning the participation of the Orthodox in the WCC has not been an easy task. This is especially due to the peculiar structural framework of the Council, in which Orthodox theology could not always find its way. The affiliation of the local Orthodox churches in the WCC at different times and for reasons proper to each Church, as well as the absence of an integrated Orthodox approach vis-à-vis the Council and the ecumenical movement did not ease the situation.

The purpose of Orthodox participation in the ecumenical movement has always been to give witness to the unity of the Church, as experienced by the local Orthodox churches. In other words, Orthodox offered themselves, right from the beginning, an "ecclesiological challenge". Recognizing - and constantly reminding their partners - that the main ecumenical problem is that of division rather than unity, they decided to participate in the ecumenical movement and the ecumenical organizations *from within* and to adopt a constructively critical attitude.

It is true that Orthodox theology – and one should add here "ecclesiology" – "could not always find its way" in the Council. One visible result of this rift has been the practice of issuing separate statements before or after major ecumenical meetings, and the later practice of holding Orthodox consultations before major ecumenical gatherings.

With regard to "the structural framework of the Council", the Thessaloniki report refers, both explicitly and implicitly, to Orthodox positions and concerns with a long history. An equitable Orthodox participation, for example, including its tangible expression

through decision-making and voting processes, has been repeatedly requested by the Orthodox, at least since the Sofia Consultation (1981). The issue of Orthodox participation "on equal footing" was highlighted by the First Pre-Conciliar Panorthodox Conference (1986) as one of the "points requiring immediate action" already at that time. The Orthodox understanding of prayer in ecumenical meetings could also be traced back to the Third World Conference of Faith and Order in Lund (1952), while the new difficulties in this area were mentioned in the Chambésy Consultation report (1995).

It is also true that "the absence of an integrated Orthodox approach vis-à-vis the Council and the ecumenical movement did not ease the situation". One should raise the question, however, to what extent Orthodox attempts in formulating their concerns have been taken seriously and received honest response from their ecumenical partners. To limit ourselves to most recent examples, Orthodox statements made during and after the Canberra Assembly (1991), as well as the report of the Chambésy consultation (1995) have been seen as "Orthodox reactions" rather than as an expression of a genuine ecumenical concern.

(ii) *Recent developments in Central and Eastern Europe*. Changes in Central and Eastern Europe, where the great majority of Orthodox Christians are situated, have drastically affected the lives of nations and peoples living in this geographical area of our world. The hopes of the first years were soon followed by serious concerns and existential questions. The unprecedented changes in political, social and economic life influenced the reading of history, the cultural heritage and, ultimately, the religious identity of nations and peoples. The fall of communism resulted both in renewed opportunity and spiritual renaissance, as well as in retrogression and wall-building.

In part, both the positive and the negative results of political change have arisen out of the sincere and genuine struggle to define, protect and live one's own religious identity. Two phenomena have posed particular challenges to ecumenical ways of thinking. Firstly, the combination of an increasingly free market, both in commodities and in thought, together with the erosion of cultural boundaries ("globalization") fostered an increase in fundamentalism spanning across denominational lines.

Secondly, the religious expansionism and proselytism (real or perceived) that has been made possible by looser political boundaries has brought the reaction of confessional protectionism. (Interestingly, although the political changes described do not directly touch the West, the same trends of fundamentalism and confessional protectionism can be felt in the Orthodox "diaspora" in the West.) The reaction from the ecumenical community to these realities needs to be one of understanding and support, to the extent that these can even be received.

(iii) *Reflection process on the "Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC".* When the CUV was adopted at the September 1997 Central Committee, the introduction to the Policy Statement underlined that member churches and ecumenical partners were now invited further to consider both the content and the implications of the document. In fact, there were a number of key issues which would need subsequent study and clarification. Some of these issues were raised - particularly although not exclusively - by Orthodox churches. Some examples include:

- the nature of the fellowship or *koinonia* which is still the aim and not a given reality;
- relationships between unity and diversity (the question of "tolerable limits to diversity");
- the understanding of "ecumenism";
- the meaning of membership in an ecumenical organization;
- forms of election and representation;
- the formation of the ecumenical agenda;
- the understanding of "local ecumenism" and its implications for WCC membership.

It is obvious that the need for further clarification in these key areas amplifies the underlying uncertainties in the relations of Orthodox churches with the WCC.

Any of the above mentioned issues, taken in isolation from the others or from its appropriate historical perspective, would not justify the extent of the present reaction. One should however take into consideration the factor of accumulation - namely an accumulation in *time,* as most of these issues have been continuously raised in the past, in *quantity* - there are, after all, a considerable number of issues, and finally in terms of *importance,* as most of these questions relate to the very essence of the Council and to all its member churches.

In this context we need to be reminded again that it is not only the Orthodox who are suggesting "change" or even "radical change". The CUV both identifies and fosters reflection and change throughout the Christian ecumenical scene. In the area of ecumenical partnership, for example, several member churches are raising the question as to how the membership of the Roman Catholic Church could be encouraged and facilitated through changes in WCC structure and self-conception.[2] The creation of a Joint Working Group in order to monitor relationships with Pentecostals is another

---

[2] For example, the 1998 Lambeth Conference has just recommended "a radical reassessment of the basis and categories of membership in the WCC, and what changes in the WCC would be required to make it possible for the Roman Catholic Church to be a full member" (Section IV Resolutions).

change stemming from the new understanding of ecumenical partnership as described by the CUV text. Similarly, some of the Christian World Communions have suggested structural changes which could allow a better co-ordination between their decision making bodies, especially by holding "assemblies" together. Regional ecumenical organizations, as stated above, also have proposed structural changes which would enhance cooperation with the WCC and coordination of ecumenical activities deployed by partner ecumenical organizations.

*

We have pointed above to three broad areas of church and ecumenical life which have contributed to the current state of affairs in the relationship between the WCC and the Orthodox churches.

In (i) we described several issues, each with its own history, directly related to *the WCC*. These include the consistent, and lately increasing, dissatisfaction concerning representation at all levels of the Council's life (the processes and discussions which set the agenda of the WCC are seen to be conducted on an unlevel playing field), the persistence of the "ecclesiological problem" due to insensitivities on all sides, and the increasing difficulty of ecumenical worship.

In (ii) we turned to problems within *the churches,* examining the changes, both positive and negative, which have stemmed from the enormous socio-political changes of the past decade, especially in Central and Eastern Europe.

Finally, in (iii) we drew attention to issues arising out of the *CUV process* which have important implications for all the WCC member churches, as well as non-member churches.

The acute need for change in the WCC's structure, life and self-conception which is currently receiving such vocal expression from the Orthodox churches needs to be considered in this broad perspective. The issues outlined above stem both from the life of the churches and from the life of the Council. It can certainly be stated that the Council's spiritual and material support of the churches experiencing upheaval in the face of socio-political change, is deeply appreciated and needs to continue. What then can be said about the Council's life, its *modus operandi,* its structure, its self-understanding, that help it better serve its member churches, in particular the Orthodox churches?

IV. The WCC as a *structure*

> Structures are the means by which the Council seeks at a given moment of its life to manifest effectively its reality as a fellowship of churches. They constitute the basic shape of the Council, the framework for particular working arrangements. Changes in this framework neither replace the insights nor deny the values of what has gone before, but rather reflect the continuing dialogue of understanding and visions. (CUV 3.14)

This affirmation of the Policy Statement places the issue of structures in the perspective of the "fellowship of churches", points to the need for a continuing dialogue among the member churches, and confirms that the CUV process is only a first step, or only in its initial stages, and therefore the discussion needs to continue beyond the next Assembly. Below are some of the issues directly related to the WCC as a "structure" which need further attention.

(i) *Membership and representation*

The continually growing numbers of Protestant member churches, recorded and welcomed by the Policy Statement, was identified long ago as a serious problem for the Orthodox. A "25% rule" for Orthodox participation had been instituted in recognition of the fact that there are different ecclesiologies operating in the Orthodox and Protestant worlds, resulting in the wide discrepancy between the number of local Orthodox churches and Protestant churches. (This discrepancy does not at all reflect the actual membership of these churches.)[3] The Policy Statement, however, dealt with the issue of the "meaning of membership" only in terms of the mutual accountability of member churches within the fellowship, leaving open the issue of Protestant-Orthodox balances and the dynamics created by an increased sense of marginalization on the part of the Orthodox.

(ii) *Representation and participation*

Aside from the fact that the "25% rule" is a simple "working hypothesis" and not a constitutional provision, it should be clear that the nature of "ecclesial/confessional" representation and participation needs to be approached differently from any other categories reflected in sociological and geographical terms. As has been stated in the previous paper from the Orthodox Task Force, the Orthodox find it perplexing to be seen and dealt with within "quota" terms alongside "women", "youth", or people from certain

---

[3] At the moment, 22 of the WCC's 328 member churches are Orthodox, and yet their combined baptised membership constitutes about half of that of the entire WCC.

geographical regions. In previous documents and in their responses to CUV, Orthodox churches underlined that three major issues have to be studied carefully in this area:

(a) Orthodox participation "on equal footing";
(b) an Orthodox participation which would allow a qualitative contribution to the WCC;
(c) a mode of election of Orthodox representatives which would satisfy not only the rules of the WCC as a "structure" but also the ecclesiological criteria of the Orthodox as members of the institution.

All three of these issues will require a serious and honest appraisal of the ways in which programmes are in fact decided and agendas are in fact set within the life of the Council.

(iii) *Decision-making*
Being a minority within the WCC as a structure, although they together represent one of the two main ecclesial, theological and historical traditions within the fellowship, Orthodox churches face an additional problem in the area of decision-making. It has been commonly accepted that the present rules and regulations with regard to decision making procedures derive their inspiration and origin mainly from the political logic of a western, specifically Presbyterian tradition. The Orthodox are not the only ones to highlight this fact. Discussion on this question has already begun in the Central Committee as a part of CUV. Yet the Orthodox are seeking to remind the Council that structural and institutional logic cannot be isolated from the fact that a "fellowship of churches" needs to develop its own mechanisms *grounded in the ecclesial traditions it represents.*

Furthermore, it is becoming increasingly apparent within many member churches that important policy decisions are made under the influence of an unregulated combina-tion of church-elected governing bodies on the one hand, and formal and informal consultative groups on the other. This situation is of concern to all the member churches insofar as the churches themselves feel increasingly distanced from the Council's operations.

V. The WCC as a *fellowship of churches*

The Policy Statement, using an expression suggested by an Orthodox Church, defines the nature of the fellowship experienced by member churches within the WCC as an "ecclesiological challenge". Undoubtedly, the challenge lies in the fact that the two ecclesiologies operating within the WCC – Protestant[4] and Orthodox – differ significantly, making *koinonia* more a goal than a reality.

---

[4] For the purposes of this paper we are using the term "Protestant" to include Anglicans and Protestants.

(i) *Membership and Orthodox ecclesiology*

The meaning of membership in the WCC is well set out in the CUV, but theological and ecclesiological issues arise from certain realities apparent from the list of WCC member churches. So far Orthodox churches have joined the membership as local churches, while (at least until recently) the entirety of Orthodoxy was present in the Council. Today some Orthodox Churches accept the present status of membership, based on the understanding of "local churches", but point to the fact that the ecclesiological challenge of an Orthodox-Protestant co-existence within the WCC should be reviewed and the growing Orthodox marginalization should be overcome. Other Orthodox Churches raise the question whether Orthodoxy should become a member of the WCC as "one" universal Church, or as "one family" of local churches. Yet, other Orthodox churches challenge the fact that so far the only way of belonging to the "fellowship" is through formal "membership", and point to the need of looking for new ways of being related to the WCC.

(ii) *Membership and Protestant denominationalism*

The question of Protestant denominationalism has been raised by the Orthodox both within the WCC and in their bilateral theological dialogues. The denominational consciousness of the Protestant side creates a fundamental difference of "ethos" within the Council as a "fellowship of churches". What are the implications of the *de facto* fellowship between Protestant denominations when they participate in the life of the Council as a "fellowship of churches"? While the practice of inter-communion between Protestant churches confirms the *de facto* fellowship, their refusal to be considered as one confessional family within the WCC seems to contradict it. Orthodox churches, therefore, question the implications of the bilateral relations between Protestant denominations in the context of the multilateral dialogue within the WCC. They also call to mind that when discussing both the ecumenical methodology and the ecumenical agenda, Orthodox or Roman Catholic traditions (including ecclesiologies and "ethos") are of a different character from Protestant denominationalism. These are some of the ecclesiological issues which have to be taken seriously as a follow-up to the CUV reflection process, in order to carry forward the understanding of the WCC as a "fellowship of churches".

(iii) *Membership and local ecumenism*

The WCC has expressed its joy at new developments and convergences within the Protestant world, especially in Europe (Porvoo, Leuenberg, Meissen). However, the fact that many Protestant churches of the same ecclesial and theological tradition are accepted as members of the WCC from the same region or country raises a number of questions from the Orthodox perspective. What does local ecumenism mean for Protestant churches of the same historical tradition dwelling together in one region? What is the understanding of a local (Protestant) church "truly united?"

VI. Models under discussion

Given the importance and scope of the issues as raised above, the current crisis cannot be solved through dialogue and negotiation with the WCC as a structure, i.e., with the General Secretary and staff, but rather with the WCC as a fellowship of churches, i.e., with the full participation of representatives of Protestant member churches. Both sides will need to accept the challenge addressed to their understanding of "unity" and their understanding of the ultimate purpose of conciliar coexistence in the WCC. The CUV policy statement, though an important document, is probably not enough to address the current ecumenical crisis facing the Council, in part because to a certain extent most of the questions arise from the CUV itself. Furthermore, many feel that the CUV document and the current internal restructuring, if taken as the final word and not the beginning of a deeper and more thoroughgoing process, represent "a realignment of deck chairs on the Titanic".

The call for a Mixed Theological Commission is therefore an appropriate one, provided that the Orthodox not see themselves as *negotiating with* the WCC, but rather, together with those Protestant churches which are her partners, in a *dialogue concerning* the WCC.

There are many discussions going on at present concerning possible models and ways of representation. What is necessary is a careful consideration of these possibilities in the light of the history of the ecumenical movement, (including the rationale for the present structure), and in the light of the most recent developments in institutional ecumenism at the regional and national levels. The models that are currently under discussion - and as yet there is no pan-Orthodox consensus on them - fall roughly into two categories, addressing different areas of concern.

A) Particularly in order to address the problem of *representation,* there are proposals to have the churches represented on WCC governing bodies according to "Church families". The main questions surrounding such proposals concern what would constitute a church family. It is for example unrealistic to consider all non-Orthodox and non-Roman Catholic churches as one family. The realization of this model would surely require careful reflection, with the possibility of adjustment as it becomes lived out.

B) Particularly to address the *ecclesiological* problem, models are proposed which would qualitatively de-stress the character of *membership*. For example, there are efforts to interpret the "Forum of Christian Churches and Ecumenical Organizations",[5] stating

---

[5] Cf. Minutes of Central Committee 1997, p. 89.

either that the WCC organize such a forum (although possibly of *churches* and not ecumenical organizations) as a "second chamber" to itself (hence the name "bicameral model"), or that the Council in fact *become* such a forum. This would address the tension and the countless misunderstandings arising from the different ecclesiological self-understandings of participating churches.

It needs to be noted that the models in both these categories carry the potential of widening the ecumenical fellowship in the WCC to include large bodies of current non-member churches, notably the Roman Catholic Church and churches of the Pentecostal family (cf. CUV 4.11; 4.12). Naturally, all their implications need further exploration within, among and between the churches.

VII. Suggestions for furthering the dialogue

It was stated at the outset of this paper that its tasks include not only interpretation and analysis, but also invitation to dialogue. Such a dialogue is envisioned on three levels: within the WCC "House" (i.e., among staff), within and between the churches, and within WCC governing bodies and consultative groups. Following are some suggestions for a methodology and process, offered for reflection by the SEG and the Executive Committee.

(i) Dialogue on the staff level

The purposes of in-House dialogue could include:

- initiation of a constructive way forward;
- sharing of information and insight between colleagues;
- clarification of misunderstandings;
- assessment of how Orthodox concerns are being received in Protestant circles;
- reporting of resulting insights to WCC governing bodies and churches.

The form and function of a staff group to this end could be loosely based, in composition and methodology, on the consultative group formed to prepare for and debrief from the Antelias meeting. Such a group could build on previous experience, evaluate the current situation and monitor developments, and account for the issues raised in the current paper. Additionally, consideration could be given to strategies for communication with Orthodox and Protestant member churches and Assembly delegates, to inform them of the issues raised and the discussions which are already taking place. The consultative

group could also advise concerning visits to Orthodox churches, arranged with the GS and other members of staff.

(ii) Dialogue in the churches

It is vitally important not only for the WCC to listen carefully to the voices of its member churches, but also for the member churches to listen to each other. This paper has indicated certain concerns which are common both to Orthodox as well as some Protestant member churches, with regard to the structures of the WCC and the present situation of the ecumenical movement. It was attempted in this way to illustrate the parameters of the current problem, which go beyond the Orthodox churches alone, and to go beyond the reflex reaction of Protestant-Orthodox polarization. More needs to be done, within the context of dialogue, to bring to the forefront the concerns which might be held across denominational lines.

Yet there are other categories of issues, notably dealing with ecclesiological questions, where there is a more prominent divide between Orthodox and Protestant. It is therefore all the more imperative to invite Protestant member churches to consider issues raised by the Orthodox, especially when these refer to Protestant ecclesiological perceptions that shape the structure of the WCC. The Orthodox need to be ready to take Protestant responses seriously into consideration, in the spirit of an open and creative dialogue.

The starting point of such a dialogue could therefore be twofold:

- prepare a careful and comprehensive *inventory of concerns shared by both Orthodox and Protestant member churches,* including those areas and issues where representatives of Protestant member churches have openly expressed their sympathy with Orthodox positions without necessarily subscribing fully to them;
- identify and *communicate Protestant responses and reactions to concerns so far expressed by the Orthodox,* with the aim of pointing to the nature of the dialogue and perceiving the issues which could form an agenda.

(iii) Dialogue in the Executive Committee

It is hoped that the Executive Committee could discuss and receive the present paper, consider the suggestions with regard to a possible methodology, and mandate the WCC staff (the GS, the OTF, an *ad hoc* mixed staff group) to follow up.

On the basis of these suggestions and their potential outcome, the Executive Committee

could also consider whether it would be appropriate to include in the Assembly agenda a carefully prepared discussion on Orthodox concerns.

The Executive Committee might give particular attention to anticipating measures and responses in the event of the abstention of any member churches from presenting candidates to the Central Committee and other governing bodies, as the Thessaloniki document can appear to suggest. The WCC staff group may therefore be mandated to study and prepare appropriate measures.

It needs to be made clear that any suggestions made by the OTF above are not intended to replace preparatory work which may be initiated by Orthodox churches towards the Mixed Theological Commission. The intention is only to anticipate, serve and facilitate these efforts. It may be appropriate to the same end that the Executive Committee also anticipate and recommend measures for the pre-Assembly period, the Assembly itself and the post-Assembly period.

APPENDIX V

FORUM OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND ECUMENICAL ORGANISATIONS

Following the action of the Executive Committee in February 1998 encouraging

> *"further exploration of issues as well as the calling of a consultation to examine the proposal* (i.e. of a Forum) *in more detail with key partners*,

plans for a small consultation were developed and invitations were issued for this meeting, which took place from 26-29 August 1998 at the Bossey Ecumenical Institute.

The consultation was designed to bring together 6 participants from the Conference of Christian World Communions (ACC, LWF and WARC, Roman Catholic Church, World Evangelical Fellowship and Pentecostal constituency), 1 from the Ecumenical Patriarchate, 4 from Regional Ecumenical Organisations (AACC, CCA, CLAI, MECC), 4 from National Councils of Churches (USA, Australia, India, South Africa), 5 from International Ecumenical Organisations (WSCF, YMCA, YWCA, WACC, Syndesmos) and 5 from the WCC (including the Moscow Patriarchate and the Oriental Orthodox). Of these, the World Evangelical Fellowship was eventually, and regrettably, not represented although it had indicated its interest in attending the consultation; the other churches and organisations all responded positively.

A working document written by Dr Konrad Raiser served as the basis for the work of the consultation. The participants developed the process of the discussions in plenary and small group sessions as the meeting went on, identifying at each stage the issues to be considered.

After careful discussion and two readings, a document prepared by a small drafting committee was unanimously approved. The document **"Proposals Regarding a Forum of Christian Churches and Ecumenical Organisations"** is attached.

The consultation also took some actions with regard to follow up:

1. A Continuation Committee was formed, composed of

Bishop Jean-Claude Périsset (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity)
Dr Cecil M. Robeck (Pentecostal)

Rev. Dr Musimbi Kanyoro (World YWCA)
Rev. Canon David W. Perry (Anglican Consultative Council)
Rev. Dr Hilarion Alfeyev (External Relations Department, Moscow Patriarchate)
Rev. Charity Majiza-McKinty (South African Council of Churches)
Metr. Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim (Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate)

If any of the members is unable to serve on the committee, the Continuation Committee can replace him or her by a person who took part in the consultation.

The Continuation Committee should pay particular attention to the question of representation of the World Evangelical Fellowship in the Organizing Committee to be set up.

Mr. Hubert van Beek was asked to act as the secretary to the Continuation Committee.

2. The document "Proposals Regarding a Forum of Christian Churches and Ecumenical Organisations" will be sent on behalf of the Continuation Committee to the churches and organisations represented at the consultation, and to a wider list of churches and organisations not represented at the consultation to be established by the Continuation Committee.

The document will be released publicly after it has been sent to the organisations represented at the consultation.

3. The secretary to the Continuation Committee will prepare a brief memorandum of the actions taken by the consultation and send this together with the document to the participants, as record of the meeting.

PROPOSALS REGARDING A FORUM OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND ECUMENICAL ORGANISATIONS

1. A consultation took place at the Château de Bossey, near Geneva, 26-29 August 1998, to consider the possible creation of a broad-based Forum of Christian churches and ecumenical organisations. Twenty-eight participants represented the WCC, Christian World Communions, Regional Ecumenical Organisations, National Councils of Churches, international ecumenical organisations and churches not at present associated with major ecumenical structures.

2. The gathering noted dramatic changes in the world situation, as well as major developments in relationships between churches and between ecumenical organisations.

Efforts to advance Christian unity now take many forms, have many players and focus on many centres. However, this diversity raises urgent questions about how to strengthen the wholeness of the movement against tendencies towards fragmentation and competitiveness, not least in view of shrinking resources. A more effective, more sustaining, more inclusive network of relationships is needed to bring differences of understanding among the partners into a mutually committed dialogue so that all may find their way to a clearer discernment and a more faithful obedience.

3. The following proposal for a Forum of Christian churches and ecumenical organisations emerged in the course of the consultation. It is offered in the hope that churches and ecumenical structures may discern in it a way forward for the years immediately ahead.

Goals and Objectives

4. The proposed Forum is *possible* because of the unity which is already given in Christ. It is *called for* because of our common faith in a reconciling God whose church knows itself summoned to become God's reconciled and reconciling people.

5. The Forum is intended to help build more significant, more inclusive relationships. It will not speak for the participating bodies, but it will provide a way for them, transcending the limitations of existing frameworks, to think new thoughts, dream new dreams, and glimpse new visions.

6. Seeking to be open to the charisms the Spirit gives to Christ's people, the Forum's style will be open, expectant and relying on a minimum of rules and structures. One condition for participation, therefore, is a willingness to accept other participants as bona fide partners in a dialogue, the aim of which is to strengthen the obedience of all to Christ.

7. The occasional gatherings of the Forum will provide opportunities for worship, exploration of matters of common Christian concern and development of enhanced mutual understanding. They are not conceived as decision-making, programme-initiating or document-producing events. However, they might lead to new forms of cooperation.

Participation

8. This is a Forum, not an organisation, therefore the question to be considered is participation, not membership.

9. Participation will be based on confessing the Lord Jesus Christ as God and

Saviour according to the Scriptures and seeking to fulfil together the common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It should be characterised by the desire to mutually engage in the search for obedience to Christ.

10. Participants will mainly be representative of church bodies and ecumenical organisations of international significance. Some participants will also be individuals who are representative of and accountable to identifiable constituencies with a commitment to our common calling.

11. Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Evangelicals, Pentecostals, and other families represented in the Conference of Christian World Communions, as well as Regional Ecumenical Organisations, International Ecumenical Organisations and the World Council of Churches, are among those envisaged as participants in the Forum.

12. Criteria of participation include willingness to listen, to talk and respond together with others in the Christian family to God's calling. Participants must have mutual respect and respect for the self-understanding of the others.

Size, Process and Content of Forum meeting

13. The Forum is a concept that will be manifest in many ways, including international meetings. Once the idea has taken root, it could meet in various configurations and locations.

14. The initial meeting should be made up of 150 -250 participants, depending on the response to the invitations issued. The process will be designed to allow maximum participation. This will begin by soliciting issues and challenges from the participating bodies prior to the meeting.

15. There will be a balance of plenary and small group time, with space for celebration and spontaneity. Worship will be an integral part of the Forum. The meeting should reflect awareness of the historical forces that bring participants together and should provide opportunities for in-depth discussion.

16. The distinctiveness will be in the style of meeting which will promote open dialogue of sharing without a focus on documentation and recommendations. No votes will be taken.

17. Provision might be made for a group of "listeners" to help discern and articulate the insights gained by the gathering.

Funding, Timing

18. Participants would be expected to cover their costs. In order to ensure fullest participation, the Organizing Committee will seek funds to cover certain overhead expenses and make available a modest amount for subsidies.

19. The initial Forum meeting may take place as early as the year 2001.

Organizing Mechanisms

20. A small Continuation Committee drawn from the consultation of August 1998 will continue as a bridge between the process thus far and its future. It could also become the nucleus of the Organizing Committee for the first Forum meeting.

21. The Continuation Committee is to consider responses to this proposal and to work out the modalities of a first meeting of the Organizing Committee by October 1999. This Continuation Committee will need to meet before mid-1999.

22. A small group of eminent persons who have a broad basis of credibility among Christians and churches might be constituted by the Continuation Committee to serve as an inviting body. This group may or may not need to meet. Invitations to participate would then go with the signatures and under the patronage of these persons.

23. The Organizing Committee should be called by the Continuation Committee in consultation with the leaders of the interested bodies who by the responses to the initial proposal sent after this meeting would have expressed interest in the Forum.

24. It will include representatives of ecumenical partners of international significance who currently have various levels of collaborating as well as new partners representing the wider community such as Pentecostal Churches, World Evangelical Fellowship, the Organisation of African Instituted Churches who may express interest. A strong representation of the Roman Catholic Church was also stressed.

25. The tasks of the Organizing Committee will include:

i) Receiving and evaluating responses which contribute to building the agenda.
ii) Building an inclusive agenda.
iii) Taking care of logistics and budget of the Forum.
iv) Raising some funds for the overhead costs as well as for granting small subsidies for those who might need it.
v) Preparation of a procedure for evaluating the first meeting of the Forum.

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

CONSOLIDATED BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 1999 (PROVISIONAL)

	Total	Operating	Activity
Staff Numbers			
Core Staff sub-total	157.82	157.82	
Non-Core sub-total	30.50	19.50	11.00
Overall FTE	188.32	177.32	11.00
Operating Budget			
Income			
30 Activity Designated Income	32,248,644		32,248,644
33 Operating Designated Income	16,354,638	16,354,638	
32 Undesignated Income	6,971,720	6,971,720	0
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	**55,575,002**	**23,326,358**	**32,248,644**
35 Exchange Gains or Losses	0	0	
36 Dividends and Interest	1,355,858	1,355,858	0
37 Production & Service Income	2,496,687	2,496,687	
39 Miscellaneous	2,300,500	1,550,500	750,000
TOTAL OTHER INCOME	**6,153,045**	**5,403,045**	**750,000**
TOTAL INCOME	**61,728,047**	**28,729,403**	**32,998,644**

EXPENDITURE				
40	Grants	28,000,266	705,000	27,295,266
41	Professional Fees	960,320	829,820	130,500
42	Travel and Hospitality	5,172,850	1,964,100	3,208,750
43	Depreciation	781,402	781,402	
44	Hire of Premises & Equipment	117,700	95,100	22,600
45	Post, Telephony, and Freight Charges	778,883	768,053	10,830
46	Office Costs	1,571,431	1,563,151	8,280
47	Publishing and Production Costs	1,160,000	841,730	318,270
48	Premises and Equipment (RR&M)	753,410	753,410	
49	Financial Costs	354,085	354,085	
50	Core Staff Costs	18,119,572	18,119,572	
52	Non-Core Staff Costs	2,513,769	1,346,992	1,166,778
60	Public Information	1	1	
63	Governance	(1)	(1)	
66	Infrastructure Costs	1	1	
71	Transfers to or from fund	90,000	90,000	
73	Transfers to/(from) provisions	(75,000)	(75,000)	
74	Transfer between teams or clusters	0	942,290	(942,290)
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		**60,298,690**	**29,079,706**	**31,218,984**
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT FOR YEAR)		**1,429,357**	**(350,304)**	**1,779,660**
Balance Brought Forward (if applicable)		**0**	**0**	**0**
Total Income as above		61,728,047	28,729,403	32,998,644
Total Expenditure as above		(60,298,690)	(29,079,706)	(31,218,984)
Budgeted closing balance		**1,429,357**	**(350,304)**	**1,779,660**